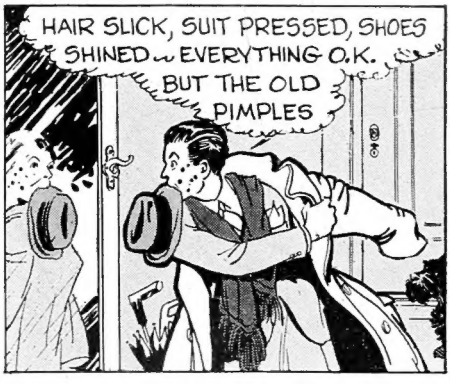
BLUE BOOK

Magazine, May 15 cents

William Chester, James Francis Dwyer,
H. Bedford-Jones, Leland Jamieson, William Makin,
Fulton Grant, Francis Cockrell, Robert Mill

..But Jack gets a tip— AND a JOB!



SAY, KNIGHT, DID YOUNG JACK SMITH SEE YOU ABOUT A JOB?
YES. NICE KID. BUT I COULDN'T WISH SUCH A PIMPLY FACE AS ALL THAT ON THE OFFICE!

NEXT DAY
BUT CONNIE, I CAN'T BUY IT UNLESS I GET A JOB ~ AND I CAN'T GET A JOB UNLESS ~
~UNLESS YOU GET RID OF THOSE PIMPLES, I BET!! WHY DON'T YOU EAT FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST, LIKE MY BROTHER DID?
$25.00

—clears the skin

by clearing skin irritants out of the blood

Don't let Adolescent Pimples make YOU lose out

PIMPLES are often a real drawback during the years following the start of adolescence—from about 13 to 25, or even longer.

In these years, important glands develop and final growth takes place. This causes disturbances throughout the body. The skin becomes oversensitive. Waste poisons in the blood irritate this sensitive skin—and pimples appear.

Fleischmann's fresh Yeast is often prescribed for the correction of these adolescent pimples. It clears the skin irritants out of your blood. Pimples go!

Eat Fleischmann's Yeast 3 times a day, before meals—plain, or in a little water—until your skin is clear and smooth once more. Start today.

Copyright, 1936, Standard Brands Incorporated

ACCOUNTING
the profession that pays

Accountants command big income. Thousands needed. About 14,000 Certified Public Accountants in U. S. Many earn $3,000 to $20,000. We train you thoroughly at home in your spare time for C. P. A. examinations or executive accounting positions. Previous bookkeeping knowledge unnecessary—we prepare you from ground up. Our training is supervised by Wm. B. Castenholz, A. M., C. P. A., assisted by staff of C. P. A.'s. Low cost—easy terms. Write now for valuable 64-page book, "Accountancy, the Profession that Pays," free.

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
The school that has trained over 1,850 C.P.A.'s
Dept. 5369-H Chicago, Ill.

WORK FOR "UNCLE SAM"

Start $1260 to $2100 a Year

MEN-WOMEN. Common Education usually sufficient. Get ready now. Write immediately for free 32-page book, with list of positions and full particulars telling what to do to get them.

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE
Dept. H292 Rochester, N. Y.

Next Month!

"Journeyman Cop"

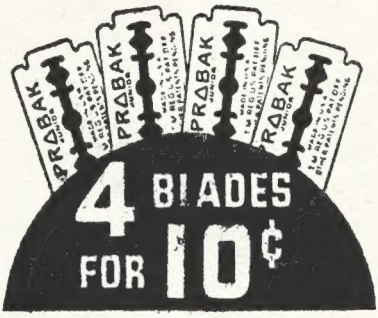
A swift moving novelette in which Robert Mill's two famous characters Tiny David of the State Police and Duke Ashby of the Department of Justice, join forces to handle a difficult and dangerous case.

Also many other fine stories by such writers as Leland Jamieson, William Chester, Fulton Grant, James Francis Dwyer, H. Bedford-Jones and Eustace Cockrell.

You're trusting to Luck

WHEN YOU BUY THE *unknown*

● Why trust to luck when you buy razor blades! At 4 for 10c, Probak Jr. is a double-edge blade of *known* quality. This blade whisks through the densest beard—glides over tender spots without pull or irritation. Buy a package today.



PROBAK JUNIOR

Coming!

"HOLD THAT TIGER"

A noted animal-trainer's amazing story of Real Experience.

TOWN TAVERN

93 PROOF—STRAIGHT RYE WHISKEY

"TASTES LIKE DOUBLE THE-MONEY!"

"AMERICA'S MOST POPULAR RYE"

Penn-Maryland Division, National Distillers Product Corp., N.Y.C.

This advertisement is not intended to offer alcoholic beverages for sale or delivery in any state or community wherein the advertising, sale or use thereof is unlawful.

BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

MAY, 1936 VOL. 63, NO. 1

Two Remarkable Serials

Kioga of the Wilderness By William L. Chester 20
The return of the Snow Hawk to the strange wild Indian land of his birth.

Caravan Treasure By James Francis Dwyer 108
The brilliant story of a desperate quest across the Sahara.

Stirring Short Stories

Three Thousand or Bust By Francis Cockrell 4
A coal-miner's son plays golf and becomes famous overnight.

Drums Across the Sea By Charles Layng 15
A black boy drums his intrepid way from Alabama to Abyssinia.

No Flame More Fierce By Fulton Grant 48
In this South American story the author of "The Pirate's Beard" is at his best.

Head Work By Robert R. Mill 59
Tiny David and the State police in a specially attractive story.

Arms and Men By H. Bedford-Jones 68
XVI—The Sallee Rover

Horses are More Human By Elmer Davis 98
A brief drama of the Civil War by one of America's foremost writers.

The Tattooed Man By William J. Makin 101
The gypsy detective Isaac Heron solves a strange case.

A Lively Novelette

The Lair in the Swamp By Leland Jamieson 78
Air adventure of the most interesting kind is the basis of this fine story by the man who gave us "Murder Island."

Prize Stories of Real Experience

Prairie on Fire By John Clayton 132
A commonplace episode of the Midwest farm country, tellingly described.

Teak Wallah By Reginald Campbell 134
His job was to superintend the "Elephants a-pilin' teak."

Russian Hunt By Boris Pavloff 139
In Czarist Russia, they let the wolf do the hunting.

Locked in a Furnace By Ivan Stretten 140
How it feels to be inside a gigantic electric toaster.

Held for Murder By Ferdinand Berthoud 142
A trader's fantastic experience in Rhodesia.

Cover Design Painted by Herbert Morton Stoops

Except for stories of Real Experience, all stories and novels printed herein are fiction and are intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

THE McCALL COMPANY,

William B. Warner, *President and Treasurer*
Marvin Pierce, *Vice-President*
Francis Hutter, *Secretary*

Publisher, The Blue Book Magazine

DONALD KENNICOTT, Editor

Published monthly, at McCall St., Dayton, Ohio. Subscription Offices—Dayton, Ohio. Editorial and Executive Offices—230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE—May, 1936. Vol. LXIII, No. 1.

Copyright, 1936, by The McCall Company in the United States and Great Britain.

Entered as second-class matter, November 12, 1930, at the Post Office at Dayton, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1897. Subscription Price, $1.50 per year in U. S. and Canada; foreign postage $1.00. For change of address, give us four weeks notice and send old address as well as new.

Special Note: Each issue of The Blue Book Magazine is copyrighted. Any republication of the matter appearing in the magazine, either wholly or in part, is not permitted except by special authorization.
Special Notice to Writers and Artists: Manuscripts and art material submitted for publication in the Blue Book Magazine will be received only on the understanding that the publisher and editors shall not be responsible for loss or injury thereto while such manuscripts or art material are in the publisher's possession or in transit.

Printed in U.S.A.

Prize Offer for

Real Experiences

THERE is material for a novel in every person's life, it has been said. Whether this is true or not, we do believe that in the lives of most of us some experience has occurred sufficiently exciting to merit description in print. With this idea in mind we shall be pleased to receive and to print true stories of real experience, running from one thousand to four thousand words each. For each of the five best of these received each month we will pay, according to our appraisal of its length and strength, an average price of $50.

In theme the stories may deal with adventure, mystery, sport, humor,—especially humor!—war or business. Sex is barred. Manuscripts should be addressed to the Real Experience Editor, the Blue Book Magazine, 230 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. Preferably but not necessarily they should be typewritten, and should be accompanied by a stamped and self-addressed envelope for use in case the story is unavailable.

A pen name may be used if desired, but in all cases the writer's real name and permanent address should accompany the manuscript. Be sure to write your name and correct address in the upper left-hand corner of the first page of your story, and keep a copy as insurance against loss of the original; for while we handle manuscripts with great care, we cannot accept responsibility for their return. As this is a monthly contest, from one to two months may elapse before you receive a report on your story.

HOME-STUDY BUSINESS TRAINING

Your opportunity can never be bigger than your preparation. Prepare now and reap the rewards in earlier and larger success. *Free 64-Page Books Tell How.* Write *now* for book you want, or mail coupon with your name and address in margin *today.*

O Higher Accountancy	O Business Mgm't
O Mod. Salesmanship	O Business Corres.
O Traffic Management	O Credit and Collection Correspondence
O Law: Degree of LL.B.	
O Commercial Law	O Modern Foremanship
O Industrial Mgm't	O Personnel Mgm't
O Banking and Finance	O Expert Bookkeeping
O Stenotypy	O C. P. A. Coaching
O Rail. Station Mgm't	O Business English
O Paper Salesmanship	O Effective Speaking

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY
Dept. 5369-R **Chicago**

Self-Supporting in Ten Months

"I am able to live on the money I earn by writing, and it is not yet ten months since I began the course! Until a few months after beginning study with you I had never had a line published in any commercial publication. What more can I say for a course which has enabled me to earn a livelihood by the most congenial work I have ever done?" John N. Ottum, Jr.
Box 95, Lisbon, N. D.

"How do I get my Start as a Writer?"

------- *Here's the Answer* -------

First, don't stop believing you can write; there is no reason to think you can't write until you have tried. Don't be discouraged if your first attempts are rejected. That happens to the best authors, even to those who have "arrived." Remember, too, there is no age limit in the writing profession. Conspicuous success has come to both young and old writers.

Where to begin, then? There is no surer way than to get busy and write.

Gain experience, the "know how." Understand how to use words. Then you can construct the word-buildings that now are vague, misty shapes in your mind.

O. Henry, Mark Twain, Kipling, Ring Lardner, just to mention a few, all first learned to use words at a newspaper copy-desk. And the Newspaper Institute Copy-Desk Method is today helping men and women of all ages to develop their writing talent . . . helping them gain their first little checks of $25, $50, $100.

Learn to Write by WRITING

The Newspaper Institute of America is a training school for writers. Here your talent grows under the supervision of seasoned critics . . . newspaper men and women. Emphasis is placed on teaching you by experience. We don't tell you to read this author and that author or to study his style. We don't give you rules and theories to absorb. The N. I. A. aims to teach you to express yourself in your own natural style. You work in your own home, on your own time.

Each week you receive actual newspaper-type assignments as though you worked on a large metropolitan daily. Your stories are then returned to us and we put them under the microscope, so to speak. Faults are pointed out. Suggestions are made. Soon you discover you are getting the "feel" of it, that professional touch. You acquire a natural, easy approach. You can see where you are going.

When a magazine returns a story, one never knows the real reason for the rejection; they have no time to waste giving constructive criticism.

The N. I. A. tells you where you are wrong and why, and shows you what to do about it.

A Chance to Test Yourself

We have prepared a unique Writing Aptitude Test which tells you whether you possess the fundamental qualities necessary to successful writing—acute observation, dramatic instinct, imagination, etc. You'll enjoy taking this test. It's free. Just mail the coupon below and see what our Editors think about you. Newspaper Institute of America, One Park Avenue, New York.

NEWSPAPER INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
One Park Avenue, New York

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test and further information about writing for profit as promised in the Blue Book, May.

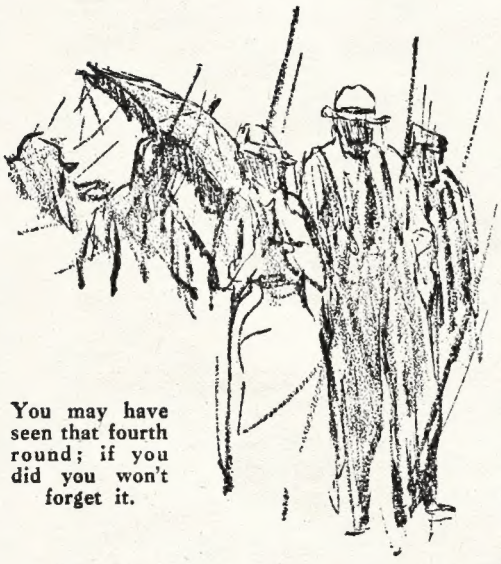
Name .....

Address .....
(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call.) 6SE566

Three Thousand

By FRANCIS COCKRELL

Illustrated by L. R. Gustavson



You may have seen that fourth round; if you did you won't forget it.

YOU read about a golf tournament. You read about the National Open, say. You find out who won; if you're interested enough, you find out who were second and third, and where your favorite finished. Maybe you read about all the great holes that were played and the disastrous holes that were played. But you don't know much about what happened.

Maybe you read about Dan Kalik that year. Maybe you were actually there and saw it with your own eyes. Maybe you were one of the hundreds jammed around that eighteenth green. You still don't know what happened, what was going on.

Dan Kalik's old man was a coal-miner. He was big and tough, and had tremendous shoulders and arms. He loved to fight. He was a prize-fighter, and a good one, for a year. But the hands that went with his huge arms and shoulders were brittle; a year was their limit.

Just a week after his last fight, John Kalik, his wife and son came down with flu. Bad. They were sick a long time. Little Dan just missed dying. When John Kalik was well enough to work again, the money he had saved in that year of fighting was all gone. He went back to the mines because they paid better than anything else he knew how to do.

Dan Kalik was a kind of scrawny kid; thin, you know, and not very strong. That flu hadn't done him any good, and in those days the Kaliks never did have enough of the kind of food growing kids really should eat. They were saving money, you see—a stake, so that big John could get out of the mines and into something with a future.

So he was glad when Dan, the summer he was ten, got a job caddying over at the country-club. Dan was a quiet kid. They never even knew he was caddying until he began bringing the money home and giving it to his mother.

Somebody gave Dan an old mashie with a badly warped shaft. When his father came home from work that day, Dan was out on the dumps behind the two-room shack they lived in, with the club and some old cut-up balls he had found. He had just hit one that soared straight and clean, out over the dumps; and when he looked up at his father, his black eyes were bright and shining and excited in his thin little face.

John Kalik saw his son's eyes, but he didn't know how he felt. John Kalik didn't know what it was like to get hold of one just right for the first time.

He said: "Look here, kid, I guess this caddy stuff is all right—you're makin' good money, for a boy; but if you want to play something, why in blazes don't you get out and play a real game? Why don't you go down to the Y and learn to box, or play baseball, or football, or something? Somethin' that takes a little guts, that'll help make a man out of you? *Golf!*" he ended contemptuously.

or Bust

The moving story of a coal-miner's stripling son whose courage made him famous overnight.

You saw Dan Kalik minimize the wind and rain in every way he could—and you thought: "This kid's not lucky; he's just a fine golfer."

Dan Kalik stood there looking at his father, and that light went out of his eyes. After a second he licked his lips once. Then he took the club and the old balls and went into the house. He didn't say anything at all.

John Kalik stood for a few moments with a frown on his face. He was sorry he had said that; he remembered how the kid had looked. But to come home and find him playing around with a sissy game like this golf—it was bound to get your goat a little. You couldn't help being a little disappointed.

John Kalik never mentioned golf after that. Dan Kalik didn't, either. There wasn't much communion between those two the next ten years. They had never been very close—John Kalik and his son.

You see, John Kalik loved this boy, but a man wants more than that; he wants to be proud of his son, and John Kalik couldn't be. It wasn't that Dan was never quite as big as the other kids his age, or quite as strong. But he was so quiet. He never got into trouble. He never came home with a black eye. And once John Kalik heard another boy, out behind their shack, announce to Dan that he could lick him.

John had stood there in the window, watching from where they couldn't see him, holding his breath, and he had heard his son refuse to fight. Turning from the window, John Kalik thought: "He hasn't got any guts. Being little, that aint his fault. He takes after Mary that way, I guess. But he hasn't got any guts."

John Kalik was ashamed of his son. He loved him, but he was ashamed of him. He never talked to anyone about

his kid—in those days. And he didn't say anything more about golf. Because a boy needed exercise, and he guessed a game like golf was probably the only way the boy would ever get any.

Dan Kalik thought his old man was the greatest man in the world. He wanted to be just like him and make his old man proud of him. He felt pretty gloomy for a long time after that day he had refused to fight. Maybe he was yellow, he thought. But he hadn't wanted to fight; he hadn't been mad at the other boy. He wished he had gone on anyhow and taken the licking he would have taken from the bigger kid. But he hadn't.

Dan knew his old man thought golf was a sissy game; and because of that, Dan thought it was too. So he never mentioned it again when his father was around; he never hit old balls out over the dump when big John was at home; he never had a golf-club in sight around the house. . . . But he went on playing golf.

He went on playing for those moments that make you feel as though you are expanding inside, as though you are getting lighter; that make you feel time has stopped; that the whole world has stopped, and you're sitting on top of it and it's yours. Those moments that come right after the sharp, clean crack of wood, the low straight flight and the long bounding roll of the ball when you've smacked one just right from the tee; that come right after the crisp click of iron, and the high, graceful arch of a ball that bounces once on the green and settles near the cup; that come right after an intentional hook catches the bend of the fairway, and following it, digs in and rolls down the middle to leave you an easy pitch.

DAN got along well at the country club. People liked to have this quiet kid caddy for them: he rarely lost a ball; he always knew how far it was from one point to another; he could tell what kind of roll you'd get that day. The stewards liked him; and because he always seemed sort of frail, they made a point of feeding him up. The pro liked him and let him hang around the shop when he wasn't caddying, because he never got in the way, and he was always thinking of little things to do that were a help.

Dan gradually accumulated clubs. The caddies could use the practice fairway in the morning if they got there early enough. Dan always did. Dan won the caddies' tournament when he was sixteen, and again when he was seventeen. After that he was no longer a caddy. He had finished high school then; and Jake Bushnell, the pro, gave him a job in the shop.

JOHN KALIK wasn't in the mines now. After five years, with Dan buying all his own clothes and bringing a little money home besides, and with Mary, Dan's mother, doing everything she could to save money, when a chance turned up for John Kalik to get out of the mines, there was enough for him to do it.

There were a lot of roads being built then. A friend of John's had also saved a little money, and together they made the down payment on a bunch of decrepit old trucks and got a hauling contract on one of those road jobs. They came out all right. They got more trucks and more contracts. They made money. They hooked up with an engineer and bid on small road jobs. But they were always working on a thin margin, always growing and branching out, and there was never much extra money.

Not enough to send a boy to college. So Dan Kalik took the job in the golf-shop. Jobs were scarce then; he was lucky to get it.

Dan hadn't changed much. He was still quiet; he still thought his old man was wonderful and wished he could have grown up to be just like him. And because he knew his old man still thought he had no guts, Dan Kalik still felt uneasy about that himself, and wished that he could do something to prove that he did have. And felt drearily certain that he never would.

He went on playing golf. He knew big John thought it was a game for sissies, a game that took no courage. He thought so too. You see, Dan Kalik thought of courage as a purely physical thing; and you couldn't get hurt playing golf; no one would black your eye; no one would split your lip.

But he went on playing, because he loved the game. He felt guilty about it. But that didn't change things; he loved it anyhow. And his game got good—very good. He was still slender and rather frail-looking: five eleven, and he only weighed one forty. But he took a free easy swing, and he could hit two fifty off the tee. And split 'em down the middle, too, on days when he was right.

The summer he was twenty, Dan Kalik qualified to go to the National Open. The elimination for his district had been held at his own club. He had caught a couple of those rounds when you can't do wrong, and had qualified.

Big John Kalik drove home this summer night with a concrete-mixer that needed repairs. There was a weary sag to those heavy shoulders, and there were tired lines in his face. The firm needed money—needed it quick, and there was no place to get it. He was going to fix the mixer himself, because he couldn't afford a repair man. Every nickel they could get on their equipment, on personal loans, in *any* way, they had already got. And it was not enough. Still working on a thin margin, they had bit off too big a bite. The biggest yet. And they could have made it, too, if luck and the weather had been playing on their side.

But they weren't. There had been three weeks more of rainy weather that spring than was the average for this section; mixers had broken down; one thing after another that ate up time and ate up money. This job would have put them over, on Easy Street, if they could have pulled through. But they couldn't now, and everything they had would be gone; they would be back where they had started. Or worse.

After supper big John went out and worked over the mixer by lantern light. Dan helped him and the job didn't take long, though neither of the Kalik men had any special genius with machinery. When they had finished, John wiped his hands with a wad of waste and looked thoughtfully at the younger man. "Son," he said, "have you got any dough?"

"I've got two hundred dollars," Dan told him. "Maybe a little more."

"I don't guess," John said, "—I don't guess you could borrow any? I don't guess you know of any of those rich guys over at the club that'd like to gamble a little? Three thousand, Danny, and we come through. Otherwise—we can't finish. We go bust."

"Look here, kid," said John, "why don't you get out and play a real game—somethin' that will help make a man out of you?"

"No," Dan said slowly. "No, I don't know any, I'm afraid."

John Kalik nodded listlessly. "Yeah. I wasn't countin' on it. Well—well, if you want to let me have that two hundred—it's not much, but it'll help us hang on awhile longer."

Dan stood there staring at the wrench in his hand, and he didn't answer for a little. He had had no intention of going to the Open, when he had qualified. He knew what kind of chance he would have against that competition: the cream of the best golfers in the world.

Now he said: "I guess I'll play in the Open. Two hundred won't help if you need three thousand, but it'll pay my expenses. And the National Open," he added, "is worth forty thousand to the man who wins it."

"Forty thousand!" John Kalik blinked. "You mean they've got a forty-thousand-dollar prize in a *golf* tournament?"

"Not the prize," Dan said. "It's just five hundred. But you get exhibitions, endorsements and stuff like that. And some of it—some of it's quick money."

John Kalik was silent a moment. Then: "If you could win—if you could win that, Danny—"

"If I can win," Dan said soberly, "it'll be a miracle. But I can go play. I can do that."

SO Dan Kalik went to the National Open. And John Kalik, who thought that golf was a sissy game and that this slender son of his had no nerve—John Kalik went along to watch. For in this tournament was the one slender hope that all his work and sweat of these fifteen years might not have been for nothing.

For two days John Kalik walked in his shirt-sleeves over green grass and around pits of sand in the stifling, breathless heat of a high summer sun. He walked and watched his son play golf. He wondered why the kid's lips grew gradually tight and thin, why those tired lines came into his face. It looked very smooth and effortless when Dan hit a ball, John Kalik thought.

It *was* smooth and easy, Dan Kalik knew, when you hit them right. But he also knew how hard it was to *make* it easy. You have to think about your shots—about hitting them right. But you can't *worry* about them.

John Kalik didn't know that; he didn't know that once you let your imagination get things in hand, you're sunk; that once you begin to think, "What if I miss?"—that once it begins to occur to you that you *may* miss—then you're due to start missing shortly.

He didn't know about the strain the National Open puts on a man. It's not that you may come to where forty thousand dollars hangs on a stroke; so long as you're still in the running, forty thousand hangs on *every* stroke. Every time you pick up a club, you're faced with a chance to boot away a fortune.

Dan Kalik knew about that, though; and he knew something else: that unless you're one man in a million, or maybe it's ten million, there's only one thing that'll enable you to stand up under it. You have to learn; you have to practise. You have to undergo that strain until it's an old story, until you can go out there and play with it hanging over you and still keep it out of your mind and not let it affect your muscles. You have to have tournament experience.

And Dan Kalik didn't have any.

So Dan Kalik, knowing he couldn't think about his game without thinking about it too much, went out there and tried not to think about it at all. Between shots he tried to remember dreams he had had, and the words to songs; he tried to do algebra in his head, and to make up limericks. When he came to his ball, he would try to believe it was just a practise shot, and that it didn't matter whether it came off or not.

And it worked that first day. He got into trouble, but he got out again. He was good, at that. He had a 73.

The next day, though, was different; the next day it began to get him. It was bound to. But also the next day luck came and sat on Dan Kalik's shoulders and rode there around the course. Two long putts curved in, and an off-line pitch, headed for a trap, hit a tree and bounced onto the green to leave him an eight-inch putt. And the round that should have been in the eighties was a 76, and Dan Kalik had qualified for the last day's play.

THAT last day when they play thirty-six holes! The low sixty and ties: sixty-four of the world's best golfers, seasoned tournament players, and a kid no one had ever heard of. A kid who was thirty-one on that list when the last day started, nine strokes below the great Jim Forest, who was in the lead.

John Kalik, in these two days, began to have a vague feeling of uncertainty about this game he had derided so; and as he watched these men play it grimly, that feeling grew. For here was no bunch of softies, fooling around with a game for girls; these were men with hard muscles and level eyes and a fighter's look about them.

And when he watched Dan hit a ball that went straight and long, and then hit one that curved into trouble, John Kalik couldn't see any difference between the swings at all. He began to get a faint idea of what his son was up against: the game was so *delicate*; the difference

between a perfect shot and a bum one was so slight! Hell, you couldn't even see it!

And during dinner that night, sitting there with this frail kid of his across the table from him, so silent, with his black eyes somber and the lines of strain so evident in his thin face, John Kalik wanted very much to help him, wanted to say something to make this easier for him. But there was nothing he could do, of course.

Once he said: "Don't worry about the dough, kid. It doesn't matter. If you don't win, it won't kill anyone, you know."

But that didn't help, for those were just words, of course; and Dan Kalik knew they were. He knew what it would mean to his old man to lose everything he had worked for during fifteen years and almost won. And now Dan had, for the first time, a chance to do something for him; not something that would make big John so very proud of him, of course, that would prove he was tough or had a lot of courage; he had no hope of that. But it would be something important just the same, and would help to make up for the other.

But it would be that only if he won; and Dan Kalik knew what his chances were. The more you want to win, the harder it is to keep from tying up, the tougher the strain. And he was a green kid playing against hardened experts.

Maybe you saw that Open. You may even have seen Dan Kalik shoot his second round; he was playing with Hagen that day, and "the Haig" was blowing hot, and had a big gallery.

You didn't see his third round; that's a cinch; you probably didn't see anyone's third round. If you were there, you remember why you didn't, of course.

You remember how it was when the first ones were starting off! Still, so very still; and hot and muggy. You didn't even move, but sweat would rise up on your skin and stick your shirt to your back.

So still! And then you remember those first little swirling breezes that rippled the smooth grass of the fairways and fluttered an old score-card across the first tee.

You remember the first drops of rain: huge, scattered drops that fell around you with heavy little *spats*.

Then the storm, the downpour. You were in the clubhouse then, of course. You stood at a window, maybe; but you

"Son," John asked, "have you got any dough? Three thousand, Danny —and we come through. Otherwise we go bust." Dan said slowly: "Two hundred won't help if you need three thousand; but it'll pay my expenses in the National Open."

He started to bring his club back for the pitch—and the tuft of grass under his foot gave way. . . . For what seemed minutes he stood looking down at his club. He had grounded it in a hazard.

didn't see Dan Kalik starting off on his third round. The first tee was only fifty yards away, but you didn't see him. You couldn't see fifty yards in that rain.

Big John Kalik saw him; big John Kalik walked around those eighteen holes, a one-man gallery. He was dripping wet from head to foot. He didn't notice it. That wind whipped rain against his face; it came in cyclonic gusts and flapped his wet shirt against his back and stung it. Big John Kalik didn't notice it.

You remember the scores that morning—78, 79, 80—lots of those. Rain, washing men out of the Open. Wind, blowing their hopes away. You remember 75 was low score; it was low until this kid you hadn't heard of before came in with a 71.

Now, you may have seen Dan Kalik's fourth round. You may have been one of the dozen who thought: "It's just a freak; the kid can't hold up; but just the same, goofy things happen in the Open; I'll get wet and have a look; he's in striking distance now, and with another round like this morning—"

So you went along, and you saw that round, and you've talked about it so much since then that you can recite it stroke by stroke; still you didn't know what was going on, and you don't yet.

You saw him tee his ball very low, almost touching the wet grass; you saw it go out a hundred yards, flying low, and then you lost it in the rain. But you thought: "Too far to the right; that wind will take it into the rough."

But when you followed him straight down the middle of the fairway two hundred and forty yards, there was his forecaddy standing beside the ball. Then you knew the ball had started hooking after you lost sight of it, and the hook had balanced the wind and held it in the middle. And you thought: "Pretty lucky!"

It's a long par four, that first hole. You saw that spoon shot. It was very high and to the left of the hole. But this time it didn't hook. It was straight, and the wind got it and drifted it twenty yards, and dropped it on the edge of the green, and it didn't roll three feet. Then, while you watched this kid get down in

two putts, you were thinking: "Maybe that hook was intentional, to get the extra roll on this long hole, and the spoon shot without hook because he didn't want any roll when he landed on the green; maybe he knows what he's doing."

When you saw him on the next tee, with the wind against him, not even tee his ball, and use his driver, and then use his driver again off the fairway, neither of the shots ever getting ten feet above the ground, minimizing the wind, you were pretty sure he knew what he was doing. And when you saw him on the third hole tee the ball high and use a brassie, lifting it high into that carrying wind for a three-hundred-yard tee-shot, then you knew very well he knew what he was doing. Then you were beginning to be glad you had come.

IT was worse that afternoon; the rain came in fitful bursts. There would be a lull, then a deluge. But the wind was high and steady now, blowing thirty-five and forty miles an hour, whipping the rain about you and about Dan Kalik in thick blinding sheets, stinging against your face. But you were glad you had come, anyhow.

You saw that round of golf, and you won't forget it. You saw this slender, frail-looking kid with the free, easy swing that got such shocking distance; you saw him minimize the rain and wind in every way he could, and make the wind help him, too, when that was possible. And you thought: "This kid's not lucky, he's just a mighty fine golfer."

And you were right about his being a fine golfer that day; but you were wrong about his not being lucky. Because you still didn't know what was going on.

Dan Kalik didn't know then, either. Dan Kalik figured it out later; when he thought about it, he saw how it happened. But right then he didn't think about it, because he was too busy.

The rain that blinded you and made the club-grips wet and slippery for those sixty-five golfers, that left casual water everywhere, that slowed down the greens and made the fairways soggy and cut down the roll: that was lucky for Dan Kalik. The wind that stung the rain against your face, that carried the ball with it or shoved it back or drifted it off-line: that was lucky for Dan Kalik too.

For you see, Dan Kalik was good at getting out of trouble. A trouble shot is an unusual shot; you have to do something different. There is generally one and only one way it should be played; but there is always that one. And Dan Kalik was good on those shots, because he had a strong and vivid imagination.

When he came up to a trouble shot, he saw that one way immediately. His mind leaped to the variation he had to make from the normal, and his mind was so full of that picture there was no room for anything else. On a regular, ordinary shot his imagination had no work to do, and worry would slip in: "What if I miss?" and, "I *can't* miss." He would play as he had the day before, when only luck had saved him.

But now, today, you couldn't find a normal shot on this whole course; and because of that, because each shot was a new and different problem that filled his mind entirely, Dan Kalik shot two weirdly perfect rounds of golf.

Maybe that sounds queer; maybe you think: "Why didn't it work the same with the other men in this tournament?" The answer sounds even more queer: "They were better golfers; they had had more experience."

Tough shots were old stories to them; they knew how to play them without even thinking. From experience! So all they saw was the trouble; all that came to their minds on tough shots was that their chances of missing were greater. And that helped them miss.

But if lucky breaks had pulled Dan Kalik through that shaky, nervous round the day before, and this queer luck of another kind had helped him today from tee to green, there was still one thing luck couldn't do for him.

He had to putt for himself.

PUTTING looks easy. But just ask a pro; ask one of the men who spend most of the year playing for prize money. "You drive for fun," he'll tell you; "but you putt for a living."

And these were perfect greens, well drained. There was nothing to distract Dan Kalik there. They were slow because they were wet, but they were all the same; there was never a new problem.

But Dan Kalik handled his putts that day. For after the first two holes he had become vaguely aware that something strange was going on, that he had become a part of some unique golf phenomenon. It gave him a sense of dissociation from himself. It let him play

in a state of some odd sort of emotional suspension, so that he could walk up to a putt and look at it impersonally, and stroke it surely and delicately.

And the putts dropped.

The putts dropped, and Dan Kalik came to the last hole of his last round, and the sun came out. The rain had stopped and the wind had died, and now the sun found a crack in the clouds and gleamed very bright and sparkling on the wet grass.

MAYBE you didn't see that whole round; maybe you stayed in the clubhouse, and kept dry. But you saw the last hole. For the sun had come out, and word came that this unheard-of kid with the funny name, who had been low in the morning, now stood on the eighteenth tee with the Open in his bag. He had only to par the last hole to win by two strokes.

The great Jim Forest was already in, and he was low. Nobody could touch him but this kid named Kalik, who had picked up eleven strokes on him today.

So you came out of the clubhouse with the rest of them and swarmed down the course to line the fairway on either side. You saw them coming from the tee: Dan Kalik and his partner, their caddies and the handful of spectators that had followed them throughout the round. And you noticed Dan Kalik, of course. You thought he looked very pale and tired, but you thought he looked confident too.

You didn't notice the man with the huge shoulders and arms. You didn't notice big John Kalik, who had followed his son through the wind and rain for thirty-five holes; who hadn't even dared speak to him for hours, or stand where Dan could see him. Big John Kalik, who now had a strange look in his eyes and whose heart was in his mouth.

You saw Dan Kalik come up to where his tee-shot lay clean and sweet in the middle of the fairway. You saw him take the three-iron from his caddy and address the ball. He looked tired, all right; but he didn't look worried at all.

And he wasn't worried. Dan Kalik was riding the crest of a wave; nothing could worry him now. The thing was in the bag; it looked almost absurdly easy. An iron to the green, a couple of putts. If he didn't get on with the iron, it didn't matter. He had a two-stroke margin. It was a cinch.

He didn't hurry. He got the towel from his caddy and wiped the grip of the three-iron, and wiped his hands, carefully. Through the deluge of rain that day, the towel had been useless. You couldn't get a grip dry. But he had solved that. He had put a handkerchief around the grip. The wet cloth had held firm against the leather, and his hands had held firm against the cloth. He didn't have to use it now.

He sighted his shot calmly and picked the place for the ball to roll onto the green. He didn't think about the shot. Easy back; then through clean with the snap. Wrists, arms, shoulders, hips, head, feet and hands all doing their little parts together and of their own accord.

The ball sailed straight and rolled onto the green. A touch too strong, perhaps. For it trickled across the green and dropped over the edge into a trap.

But Dan Kalik didn't care then. He almost chuckled. For he wasn't worried about getting out of the trap. And then two putts, and he was down and he had won. He could do it with his eyes shut.

He walked along the fairway. He didn't notice you and all those others standing along it; he didn't notice you as you jammed around the green.

Dan Kalik looked down at his ball and grinned a tiny grin. It wasn't in the sand. It had come over the edge of the trap so gently that it had hung on a tuft of grass halfway down the steep slope. An easy shot, very easy. Just sitting there with nothing under it but blades of grass, waiting for the flat surface of the niblick to pitch gently onto the green.

HE got the club from his caddy and dried it, and dried his hands, and then tested his grip carefully before he stepped into the trap.

He settled his right foot halfway down the slope against a little hump of dirt that clung around a tuft of grass. He brought his left foot over the bank and rested it against the slope just enough to balance him steadily. All his weight was on his right foot.

He waggled his club once, making sure of his grip, being very careful to touch nothing with the club. He started to bring it back for the pitch—and the tuft of grass under his right foot gave way and he slid down the side of the trap a foot or so.

Then he didn't move for what seemed like minutes. He just stood there look-

ing down at the head of his club. And when he looked up, his face, which had been pale, was a dead white; and his voice when he spoke was tight and came through thin lips:

"I—" he said, and then he swallowed once. "I grounded my club," he said.

The referee, looking down at him, nodded sympathetically, but gravely.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, you grounded it. That's a two-stroke penalty."

DAN KALIK nodded wordlessly and looked down again. It had been an accident. It had been plainly unintentional. But you can't ground your club in a hazard. If you do, it costs you two strokes. And he had grounded it.

And now his ball, which had been lying two, was lying four. And now Dan Kalik, who had had three strokes to get down to win, had *two* strokes to get down to *tie*.

He set himself again, very carefully this time, and then he shot. It wasn't a very good shot. And it wasn't a very bad one. It came to a stop twelve feet from the cup. Dan Kalik climbed up onto the green.

You saw him come up. You held your breath and watched and waited. John Kalik saw him come up. He saw him come up to face that putt; and John Kalik, who was big and tough, turned paler than his son.

For John Kalik had got the idea today; he had realized what you were up against; what his son was up against. In a fight, if things get tough, you can back up against the ropes and come out swinging. You've got an opponent; you've got some one and something to fight.

But you haven't, in golf. You're fighting yourself. It's not that you have to make yourself *do* something; you have to make yourself *not* do things. You have to make yourself not be tense, and keep your muscles from tying up. You have to be sure and firm and delicate.

There it was: a little ball lying out there on the grass. And a hole twelve feet away. And his kid, with that awkward-looking club they called a putter, had to knock it in.

A chance at forty thousand dollars if he did. And nothing if he didn't.

John Kalik looked at that ball and began to shake all over.

It was so easy, so very easy to miss. It was so delicate. The gentlest touch, a blade of grass that grew the wrong way, could turn it aside.

John had been a fighter. He had finished his last fight with two broken hands; and he had stabbed enough with those hands in the last round to come out with the decision. There have been many game fighters, but none gamer than John Kalik. And John Kalik realized now that if he had practised this game for years, he couldn't sink that putt. He didn't have the *guts*.

Young Dan Kalik stood on the green alone. That was the thing; he was so alone out there. All that weird confidence, that can't-do-wrong feeling, was gone out of him now. He was out there alone with a club and a ball and a cup. He saw you now, and he saw the rest of the gallery.

You stood there so quiet, holding your breath. You and all the others; you were tense, curious faces and hundreds of staring eyes. You hemmed him in. It was so quiet. If only there were the rain now, or the wind; if only some one would scream or start a fight.

But it was still and quiet, and no one moved or spoke. And there was the ball and there was the cup. He had to knock the ball in with this clumsy thing in his clumsy hands.

FOR he was afraid now; he was nervous now. He couldn't get his breath. And his mind was full of hideous things: of how far it was to the cup—twelve feet or a million miles, he couldn't tell; of how *small* the cup was; of how treacherous was the slope of the green now; of how much its speed might have changed from previous greens, through drainage these last fifteen minutes; of those hundreds of staring eyes around him, and those hundreds of held breaths that waited to come out all together in a long, sighing "Ah-h-h-h" when he had missed; and of what it meant to his father that he should *not* miss.

Dan Kalik stepped up to the ball; he laid his club behind it.

Then he turned abruptly away, and dropped his club to the grass and said to the referee in a queer, toneless voice: "It's all right if I wait a minute?"

The referee frowned. He said: "Well —yes. Yes, you can take what time you need to line up the putt."

Dan Kalik turned back then, and dropped to one knee on the wet turf and stared at his ball. He stared at his ball until he didn't see you and all those people standing with you, close around him. He said to himself: "This is just

a putt. You step up and tap them in. Bobby Jones said to be sure you were breathing easy."

He breathed. He counted while he took twenty slow, deep breaths and let them slowly out—staring at the ball, until he didn't see it really, until his eyes looked glazed.

Then Dan Kalik rose and picked up his putter and walked to his ball as a man walks in his sleep. He set his feet. With no preliminaries he stroked the ball, and it rolled out and took the slope and curved to drop into the middle of the cup.

A long, reverent sigh swelled out to envelop him; but he didn't know it. Young Dan Kalik's knees had given way, and he was sitting in the middle of the green.

His teeth began to chatter.

JIM FOREST beat Dan Kalik in the play-off the next day. He beat him by five strokes, which was about right. That's about how much better a golfer Jim Forest was. . . .

Dan Kalik sat on a bench in front of his locker. He had been there several minutes, but he hadn't moved yet even to untie a shoe. He sat there looking down at the floor, and his shoulders sagged wearily.

Big John Kalik sat beside him. They hadn't talked much the last two days. Big John had wanted to talk to his kid, but he couldn't find the words. He tried now.

"Well," he said awkwardly, "well, son, you played a nice game. A mighty nice game."

After a second Dan Kalik said bitterly: "If I hadn't slipped! If I'd had enough sense to get solid before I took a club in my hands—"

Big John found the words then.

"Danny," he said, "forget it. We'll be okay. If I go back to the mines, it aint going to kill me. It doesn't matter. Because you see, I was a pretty game guy in my day. I had some guts. But Danny, the best day I ever lived, if I'd played golf all my life—" He shook his head a little and looked away, and when he finished his voice was very soft: "—I wouldn't have had the guts to sink that putt."

Dan Kalik didn't look up for a minute. He couldn't. His old man was just trying to cheer him up; his old man was a swell guy. . . . Then he looked up—and saw his father's eyes.

DAN KALIK had finally had his shower and was dressing, when Jim Forest came in.

"It was mighty pretty, kid," Forest said. "I feel as if I'd stolen it. Tough break, that! But that's golf. Now, about these exhibitions—I figure the best thing is just to team up now, and insist that we play them together. It'll mean more for both of us than if we leave it to chance."

Dan Kalik blinked at him. "Exhibitions?" he said. He swallowed. "Exhibitions! You mean—" He couldn't finish.

"Wake up!" Forest hit him on the shoulder. "You're news, kid. You got color. They'll cry for you. You won't get what I do, but you'll get nice dough. A hundred, or a hundred fifty a crack."

Dan Kalik got his breath. "A hundred!" he said. "Listen—I mean—look, would it be—could I get any of it *quick?*"

Forest chuckled. "Well," he said, "by tomorrow noon we ought to have enough guarantees for you to borrow a thousand on. There'll be more when we get our route laid out. Between five and ten grand for you, all together, I'd say. They'll go for you, kid. You'll see."

IT was about twenty minutes later that John Kalik said: "Son, when this is over, what'll you do? If you want to come in with us—well, you got an interest waiting for you, you know. It'll be a damn' solid company then, too."

Dan Kalik was silent a second. Then he said hesitantly: "I—I—well, you see, if this is like Forest says it'll be, I'll have enough publicity so I ought to be able to get a pretty good pro's job. I've had the three years' apprenticeship; I'm eligible for the P.G.A. And—I'd like that. I guess I'd like that pretty well."

"Yeah, I guess so," John Kalik said slowly. He paused a moment, looking a bit sheepish. But he went on:

"Well," he said, "well, I guess I aint been gettin' as much exercise as I really ought to. If you think maybe I could learn to play the game half decent—not like you, of course, but just *pretty* good —why, let me know when you get settled. I'll be around for some lessons when this road job is done."

Big John Kalik never used to talk about his son. Now he plays golf four days a week, and talks about him all the time. . . . And now you know about the National Open that year.

"'At rebellion came on me suddent-like, an' Ah let 'at big Rendezvous have it right behin' de eah!"

Drums Across the Sea

The stirring tale of the metamorphosis of Damon Pythias Green.

By CHARLES LAYNG

IT is difficult for us old grads to conceive of the Wendover drum without Damon Pythias Green. The Wendover drum still reposes in the sanctum reserved for it under the stadium; but Damon Pythias Green, after years of staying put, has removed himself far, far from the peaceful scholastic atmosphere that graces Barwood, Alabama. For years the Wendover drum—the biggest drum of any college in the South, although State Normal grads may vainly dispute the claim—was never seen except in the company of Damon Pythias Green. Now, alas, that association has been broken up, a happening as unthinkable, as unnatural, as the separation of ham and eggs, or of Scotch and soda.

As the person responsible for the association in the first place, and as the only Wendover grad who, until now, has known what happened to Damon Pythias Green, it seems to devolve upon me to reveal the amazing facts in the case.

Modestly, I admit to a certain innate talent and no small amount of skill with the drumsticks, either musical or culinary. After all, why shouldn't I admit it, since it's a hereditary trait, for wasn't a first cousin of my father the drummingest drummer-boy and the chicken-eatingest youngster for his size in the whole Confederate army? He was. Therefore it is not at all surprising that my abilities along those lines should have been recognized, and that, as early as my freshman year at Wendover, I had already attained the honor of being bass-drummer in the Wendover band. It was then that I met Damon Pythias Green.

Wandering alone one night on the deserted football field, the better to dream

dreams of the young lady who was currently wearing my frat pin, I heard the roll of the drum issuing from the darkened depths under the stadium. Even in my somewhat bemused state, my musician's soul told me that the drumsticks were in the hands of a master. Such rhythm, such volume and such tone are not attained by one drummer in ten million.

Hastily, and more than a little reverently, as that masterly thrumming thrilled me to that very cockle of my heart reserved for love of drumming, I rushed to the room where the instruments were kept. As I entered, I could see the ghostly outlines of the drum in the stray wisps of moonlight that wafted in the window, but of the drummer nothing was visible—the drum seemed to be beating itself.

I must admit that my first thought was to leave the room, the stadium and, for that matter, the campus, as quickly as possible; but then I hesitated. After all, was not my father's second cousin the hero of Shiloh? He was. Therefore I stayed where I was for a moment to gather courage, and then moved in closer. The drummer became visible, or at least as visible as a small inky-black colored boy ever is of a darkish night. That was my first sight of Damon Pythias Green.

WITH his small body hunched over in concentration, and only the whites of his eyes showing in his ecstasy, he was pounding that drum as it had never been pounded before, even by me. So intent was he that, even when I spoke to him, he didn't look up; and it was not until he had finished—and superbly, too—a long and difficult roll that he noticed my presence. Then, with a yell, he started for the door as fast as his short legs could carry him. It was all I could do to catch him, grab him by the scruff of the neck and hang on.

"Where did you learn to drum?" I asked, when for a moment he had stopped squirming.

"On dishpans in Mammy's kitchen, suh."

He looked up at me with his eyes rolling in fright, and then he flashed a grin of recognition.

"Scuse me, suh, haint yo' de bass drummer in de band?"

I nodded, and an eager look crossed his face.

"Nen mebbe yo' c'd fix it so's I could play on 'at drum nights sometimes, when nobody else wants to. Ah'd do anythin' fo' you, suh, ef'n yo' could."

That's how the association between Damon Pythias Green and the Wendover drum began; for in deference to a fellow-artist, I could do nothing less than to have him appointed custodian of the band instruments, and puller of the cart on which the bass drum rested during the band's parades.

IT proved an excellent arrangement; for Damon Pythias got to play on his beloved drum, and I got a most industrious valet. Damon Pythias, in addition, became quite a campus celebrity, with the aid of Professor Cyneas F. Pinfeather, Ph.D., head of the psychology department at Wendover. As it happened, Professor Pinfeather had just returned from spending his sabbatical year abroad, at the exact time when the first of the faint Freudian stirrings that were to make America complex-conscious began; and Damon Pythias smilingly and willingly agreed to serve as Exhibit A in the Professor's psychology courses. For hours, he would doze in a chair next to the Professor's desk.

"This young person," the eminent Doctor was wont to intone, "is the perfect example of the inferiority complex, and one of its by-products, the size fixation. Although he is approximately eighteen years of age, you will note that he is much smaller than is usual for that age, and—"

I shall not attempt to quote the Professor literally, largely because I could not if I would, in view of a fortunate facility of mine of being able to sleep without exterior signs that anyone as wrapped up in his subject as the Professor was, could distinguish. However, through sheer repetition, it did eventually soak in upon me that Damon Pythias, according to Messrs. Pinfeather and Freud, in the order named, was doomed to worship objects of large size: hence his love of the bass drum. Moreover, according to the Professor, he would, at the proper time, marry a woman much bigger than himself and be henpecked ever after.

"Or perhaps," the Professor would conclude, and I remember his exact words, as they marked the welcome end of the hour and always awoke me, "there will be a rebellion, and the subject will endeavor to prove his superiority. When this occurs, a complete and basic metamorphosis will, in all likelihood, take place."

And Dr. Pinfeather, Ph.D., thereupon achieved a certain fame, even among his students, when Damon Pythias—possibly under the influence of the power of suggestion—did exactly as the Professor had predicted. From among the not unlimited choice of large black girls in Barwood, he selected the largest and the blackest, in the ample person of Rendezvous Applegate, and duly led her to the altar, or *vice versa.*

"Perfessor sho' hit de nail on de haid about me'n' Rendezvous," Damon Pythias explained to me.

"But why did you marry her?"

Damon grinned his ample white-toothed grin.

"Ah dunno! But what he mean about dis rebellion?" he continued. "Thought 'at was ovah long ago, when we-uns got us freed."

I tried to explain to Damon Pythias that, between persons, a rebellion meant something quite different, and that what he referred to hadn't been a rebellion anyway, but a war between the States. I'm afraid, however, that I made rather heavy weather of it, though Damon Pythias was a bright enough lad. To him, the long words of Professor Pinfeather were quite sufficiently impressive to be taken as a form of "conjuh," and there wasn't a colored boy in all of Barwood who didn't know the uselessness of fighting that.

THAT the Professor was right, too, in his prediction that Damon Pythias would be henpecked was soon apparent. Rendezvous had a mind of her own, with a tongue to match, and a temperament and physique ideally adapted to the congenial task of henpecking a scrawny, undersized negro. Although it is doubtful if she ever heard of the Professor's prophecy, she fulfilled it to the letter, none the less. For a long time Damon Pythias said nothing about it, but I could tell from his touch on the drums, times back of the stadium when he thought no one was within earshot, that his heart was sad and crying out for independence.

In due course, and without honors, I was graduated; but Damon Pythias stuck to me like a burr, pressing my clothes and shining my shoes and trying vainly to get me to keep up with my drumming. But I was too busy with my current frat-pin wearer and my new duties as reporter for the Barwood *Banner* to pursue my art; and I never have taken it up again. Not, you will understand, but that, given the drumsticks even today, I couldn't turn in a masterly performance; but you know how such things are. They drift.

Damon Pythias, on the contrary, went on taking care of his drums, his drumming and his Rendezvous, uncomplaining, and sometimes even cheerful under the spell of his own drumming. It was not until some years later, as I was about to depart for the metropolitan field, that I ever heard him protest. Just a few days before I left, he appeared at my establishment wearing what, in anyone some shades lighter, would have been a very black eye. He rubbed it with tender fingers.

"'At rebellion Perfessor allus talks about, hit aint fur away now, suh," he told me. But I only laughed at him, for to me, Rendezvous and Damon Pythias seemed as firmly united as were Damon Pythias and the Wendover drum.

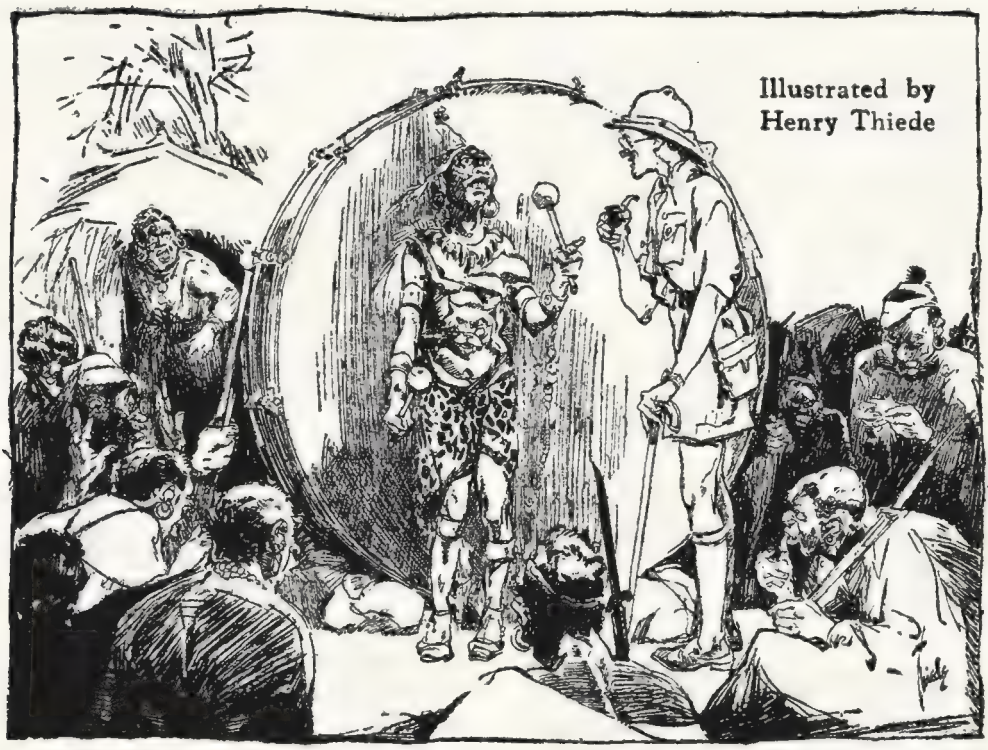
AS it happened, I was wrong on both counts, but it took years to bring it about. On my less and less frequent visits to Barwood, Damon Pythias would mutter ever more and ever darker threats, but it was only recently that I returned to Barwood to find him gone at last.

Rendezvous told me all about it when she came to inquire if I knew anything of his whereabouts.

"'At Damon Pythias, he were a deep one," she informed me. "F'r ten yeahs he de best husband a 'ooman evah had; and nen, what he do? Nigh to muhdeh me, 'at what he do. One night I tol' him not to make so much noise wiv a ol' drum f'm de band he had round de house. He di'n' say nuthin'; jes haul off and sock me alongside de haid wiv a drumstick, he do. When I come to, he gone, dat wuthless Damon Pythias. Haint seen hide n'r haih o' him sence. Think he come back?"

I consoled the gigantic Rendezvous as best I could, and then proceeded to forget all about Damon Pythias and his problems, for I received a telegram that sent me scurrying back to New York. My big chance had come. The paper wanted to send me to Ethiopia as war correspondent; would I go? Would I? Wasn't my father's third cousin one of the best war correspondents the Birmingham *Herald* ever had? He was. So I went.

Adventures awaited me in plenty, but if you are interested in them, you will



Illustrated by Henry Thiede

"Ah'm big stuff now; nobody c'n tell me what to do; Ah'm a gawd, an'—"

find a masterly account in the Daily *Bugle* or any of the papers subscribing to its syndicated foreign service. The fact remains that I alone, of all the foreign correspondents, penetrated into the far and mountainous north of Ethiopia —into the territory of the Hyena men. It was in the company of a Hyena chieftain and his followers that I penetrated into the unknown Geez country, climbing high mountains, skirting dizzy gorges and generally disporting myself as described in Articles IV and V of my series and Chapter 18 of my forthcoming book.

What will not be in the book, however, is my astonishing renewal of acquaintance with an old friend.

MY safari had arduously penetrated far beyond the spots that are marked on the map, when one evening as I was huddled over a campfire, the rolling of a drum came to my ears. I leaped to my feet in utter astonishment, for there was something about that beat that was unmistakable. There was, there could be, only one person in the world who had that peculiar, insistent, insidious rhythm at his finger-tips; and that person was Damon Pythias Green. In another moment I was certain, for the distant drummer launched into the bass-drum arrangement of "Old Wendover to Thee," something I could never forget.

But if the rolling of the drums across miles of high plateau had a startling effect upon me, it had a positively electrical effect on the natives who accompanied me. With one accord they prostrated themselves rapidly five times, to the accompaniment of a wailing chant. Then, although they were tired from the day's march, they leaped to their feet and began shouldering their burdens. Under the spell of the roaring of that distant drum, which was now doing "Thy Storied Ivied Walls," they worked faster than I had ever seen them work, in a sort of feverish trance.

I sought out the chief to protest, but he merely shook his head and pointed in the direction whence that magnetic booming came. By this time I had acquired a fairish familiarity with the language, and after several repetitions I caught the chief's meaning.

"We must go on, now, tonight," the chief said, "for that is the voice of the great Ngbani calling us—calling, calling, calling!"

I stared at him in amazement.

"Nonsense! The men are tired, and so am I. We'll stay right here until morning."

"No. The white chief is powerful, true; but when Ngbani calls, we come."

"And who is Ngbani?"

"Something more than man, something— Listen, he calls us to assemble! Perchance the Italians are coming. Perchance—but no matter: Ngbani calls, and we obey."

WHAT Ngbani was actually calling at that moment was "Beat Southwestern Wesleyan Tech," but my protests went for naught. There and then, tired as we were, the safari set out, drawn irresistibly toward the vortex of that whirlpool of sound that filled the air with a throbbing beat. Dancingly the Hyena men carried their heavy burdens uphill and down at a swift trot, to the beat of "Plunge Those Forty Yards," and it was quite all that I could do, even though unburdened and buoyed up by that immortal Wendover song as I was, to keep up with them.

All through the night our ears pulsed to the siren call of that beat, now steady, now quavering, but always insidious, and never more so than when it took up "The Sweetheart of Tau Epsilon Nu." Louder and ever louder it grew as we approached it, until at last, 'mid a burst of "The Orange, Blue and Heliotrope," we debouched from a sparse forest and into a huge clearing. Other groups were already there, and still others were approaching from all directions; each native, from the mightiest chiefs down, prostrating himself in a sort of frenzied reverence as soon as he reached the clearing.

In the center stood the biggest drum I've ever seen; and beating it with the sure, deft hand of a master, was a small wizened negro in whom—despite his outlandish costume of lion's mane and leopard's skin and necklaces of vicious-looking teeth from palpably defunct animals —I recognized Damon Pythias Green. He was as intent as ever over his drumming, but he no longer hunched while playing. His head was high and his chest thrust out, and he was drinking in the adulation offered him from all sides. I approached him.

"Hello, Damon Pythias," I shouted into his ear above the roar of "Wendover's Victory."

He dropped the drumsticks as though he had been shot, and whirled around with tears of welcome in his eyes.

"How come? But nevah mind, suh. The mainest an' impohtantest thing is, yo' is heah an' c'n see what's happened to lil' ol' Damon Pythias Green. See all those niggahs? They thinks Ah'm a gawd—an' me a lil' runt f'm Barwood, Alabam'!"

"But how did this happen?"

"Well suh, 'at rebellion 'at Perfessor done talked so much about, hit came on me suddent-like, an' Ah let 'at big Rendezvous have it right behin' de eah, an' den—"

"Yes, I know all about that; but how did you get here?"

"J'ined a cull'd band goin' on a round-de-wuhld cruise, an' lef' 'em when they tol' me we was headin' back to'ds Barwood. Happened to be in poht at Jibuti, an' Ah lef' theah and wandehed up heah about six months ago. An' didn't I find me a drum! Dey claims nobody c'n beat it but de great Ngbani, so Ah is it. Looky!"

He turned to the drum and drew from it a few sobbing sounds that I recognized as "Cutting English III." And from a thousand throats the worshiping cry of "Ngbani!" rose.

"It seems that the metamorphosis predicted by Professor Pinfeather is a *fait accompli,*" I told him.

"Huh?"

"You've changed."

"Yas suh, f'm de bottom up, f'm de inside out, f'm de outside in. Ah'm big stuff now; nobody c'n tell me what to do; Ah'm a gawd, an'—"

A SHRILL and angry scream caused him to leave the sentence suspended in midair.

From an adjacent hut there emerged the largest negress I've ever seen, six feet and a half tall if she was an inch, and of the general breadth of a barn door.

"'At's mah new wife," Damon Pythias explained.

In the voice of a petulant foghorn—an unusually loud foghorn—the giantess shouted something at Damon Pythias, and he replied.

As I have said, my knowledge of the Amharic tongue is only rudimentary, but it sufficed for this interchange, which might be translated as follows:

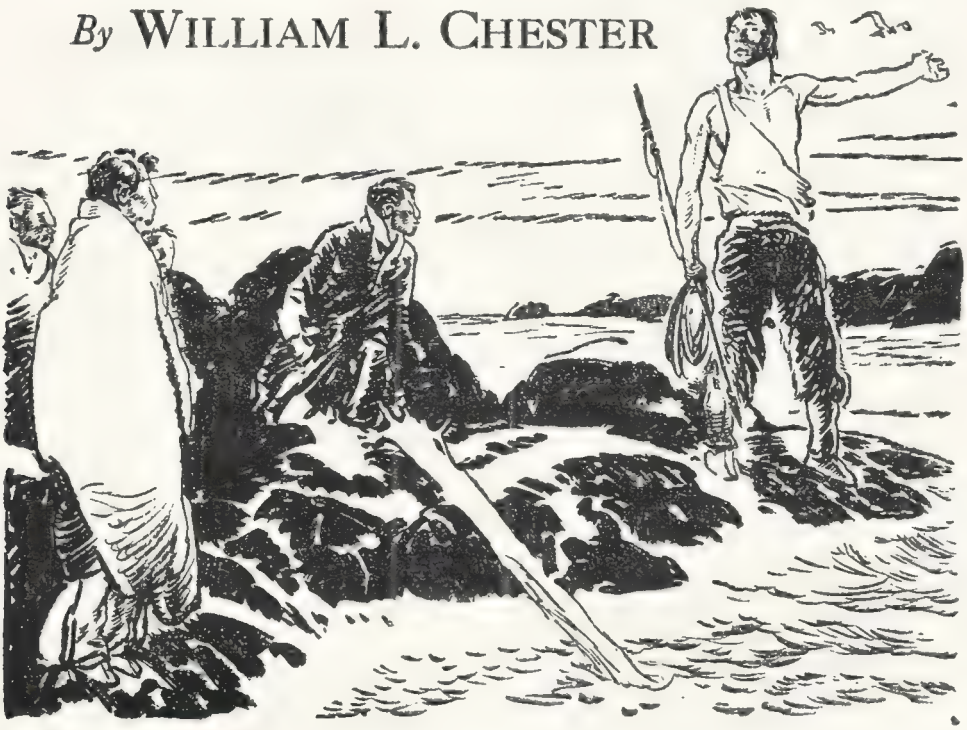
"Hey, yo' wuthless scoundrel, what yo' been doin' out theah all night wiv 'at trash? Yo' c'm right in heah this minute, or Ah'll knock yo' eahs down."

The great Ngbani looked at me for a moment.

"Yas'm, honey, Ah's comin'," he said.

The epic of a gallant young rebel against civilization, and of his hazardous journey back to the wild Arctic oasis of his birth.

By WILLIAM L. CHESTER



KIOGA of the

The Story Thus Far:

THE extraordinary events here set forth had their beginnings a generation ago when Dr. Lincoln Rand set sail aboard the schooner *Cherokee* on a great-hearted errand as medical missionary to the primitive people of the Northwest coast. With him went his young wife Helena and his Indian friend Mokuyi.

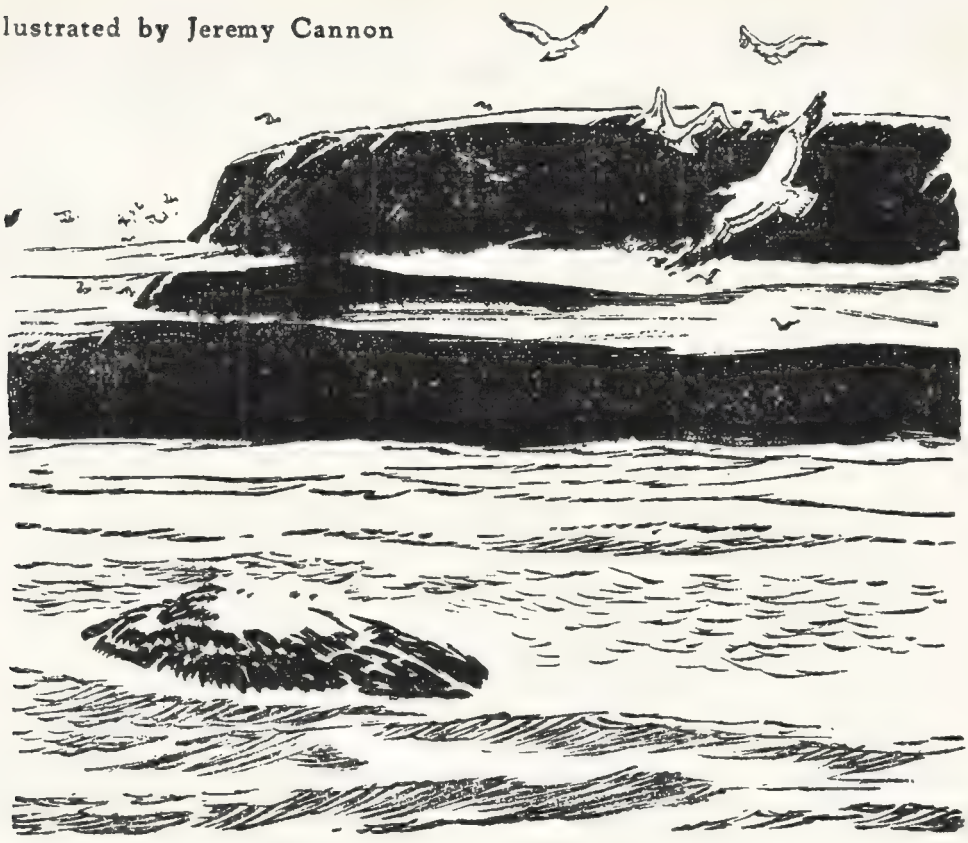
Blown far out of her course by North Pacific gales, through the Bering Sea and into the unknown Arctic north of Siberia, the *Cherokee* was wrecked upon a wild and reef-girt coast—the shore, it proved, of the great hitherto unknown land of Nato'wa: a region warmed by uncharted ocean currents and by great volcanic fissures and hot springs; a land thickly wooded with evergreens of the sequoia family, and supporting many and varied wild animals. Stranger still was its human population: a people so like the American Indians in appearance, in language, in life and beliefs and customs, that Dr. Rand soon came to the conclusion that here was the original birthplace of the Indian race.

Not long after the arrival of the castaways, the son of Lincoln Rand and Helena was born; but only a few weeks later the child's parents were both killed in a raid by hostile natives upon the Shoni tribe who had given them shelter. Thereupon the child was adopted by Mokuyi and cared for by his native wife Awena.

In this primitive life, Kioga, or the Snow Hawk, as he was named, grew to a splendid manhood. From Mokuyi, and from books salvaged from another ship wrecked upon the coast, he learned to speak and write English; and from his wild comrades he acquired a wealth of forest lore. When Mokuyi was murdered

Copyright, 1936, by The McCall Company (The Blue Book Magazine). All rights reserved.

Illustrated by Jeremy Cannon



WILDERNESS

by a Shoni secret society, Kioga avenged his death implacably. And his prowess in war and hunting at length made him war-chieftain of the tribe. When, however, another party of white people were wrecked upon the reefs of Nato'wa, foolishly fired upon the natives and were about to be put to death, Kioga rescued them. And for that he was exiled from his adopted people.

Yearning to see the country of his fathers, Kioga aided this castaway yachting party—Beth La Salle, her brother Dan and her suitor Allan Kendle—to build a boat and escape. On the southward journey, Kendle grew suspicious of Beth's growing interest in Kioga, and contrived to have him left marooned on the ice when a whaler picked up the rest of the party.

The Snow Hawk survived all dangers, however, and made his way to San Francisco and thence to New York. But civilization proved too much for Kioga. Disgusted by its many hypocrisies and believing his love rejected by Beth, he left New York and set out overland through Canada and Alaska to make his way back to Nato'wa. And on the way he gathered a group of American Indians —people homesick for the free and simple life that was theirs before the white man came—to take back with him to the land of their forefathers.

Meanwhile, Beth La Salle, her brother Dan and their friend the scientist Dr. Munro chartered the schooner *Narwhal* and set forth from San Francisco to overtake him. *(The story continues in detail:)*

AT Juneau the *Narwhal* interrupted her northward voyage for a few additional supplies—and to hire a new cook; for

Henders, the man they had shipped at San Francisco, had shown himself too fond of liquor to warrant risking him on their long and hazardous voyage. The search was delegated to Dan La Salle.

It was the noon-hour when he landed, and not far from the schooner he came upon a crowd of dockhands and stevedores gesticulating angrily before a wall of high-piled merchandise. Wrathful epithets crackled on the salty breeze. Approaching the scene of hostility, Dan peered between the heads of the agitated dock-gang.

A stranger figure never trod the waterfront than he upon whom Dan's curious gaze alighted: Not over five feet four the stranger stood, dwarfed in the circle of his persecutors. Brown as coffee was the homely face below the brim of a dusty soft hat. From under the wavy brim a most peculiar pair of eyes looked calmly forth upon the world, and found something therein to twinkle at. Like most else about the man, the eyes did not quite match, and one bushy brow was but half the size of its neighbor, a scar marking the spot where once its remainder had flourished. The nose was remarkable for its size and straightness, above sweeping lank mustaches. For the rest, from skinny, wrinkled turkey-neck down, he was a most unkempt, disreputable specimen of mankind.

All of this Dan's eyes absorbed in a swift glance, as he sought the source of a high-pitched chatter that rose defiantly above the barrage of profanity. Suddenly a long prehensile coil flicked its length about the little man's neck. A black spidery hairy hand appeared from behind one ear to seize his shirt-collar. Its mate, flourishing a fistful of good American currency, proceeded to stuff the greenbacks into the stranger's breast pocket. Whereafter the diminutive monkey continued spouting fury and indignation from safety behind its nondescript master. At a word from beneath the mustaches, the little animal became abruptly silent. Without formality the stranger then introduced himself to all who cared to listen.

"Shore as my name's Flashpan, us-all better be a-movin' on."

The voice, like his person, was unusual, coming cracked and alternately strong and whispered.

"'Taint nowise healthy hereabouts for us, or for others," he added meaningly, producing a long-barreled pistol of ancient vintage, and cocking it audibly

with an agile thumb. "Naow, gent'men," he continued, "cl'ar the road!" Then, to the monkey on his shoulder: "B'hold the ways of men, Placer, and be thankful the good Lord made ye a monkey. The heathens like to cleaned us out with marked cyards; yet when we turn the tables and git it back, they cuss; and what's worse, they repent not."

At this point one of the angry dockhands would have laid hands upon the little man from one side, but a black dog of northern breed leaped up and clicked menacing white fangs an inch from his throat. An instant later the entire mob, closely pursued by this grim Cerberus, took to its heels, leaving the diminutive stranger in command of the field.

He who called himself Flashpan eyed them quizzically a moment, spat with incredible exactitude ten feet across the dock into the bay, and thrust his weapon back into his rope belt. Through his fingers he sent forth a shrill whistle. Back came the great dog with wagging tail. Bending, Flashpan swung an immense packsack hung with pick and shovel and cooking-outfit, to his back, upon which the monkey sprang instantly.

THUS, like a scrawny Atlas bearing the earth upon his shoulders, Flashpan prepared to continue his journeyings anew, when his bright all-noticing eye chanced to glimpse the *Narwhal,* tugging at her dripping lines. Checking, he lowered his immense burden and its agitated occupant, to gaze yearningly upon the stout craft.

"Handsome, isn't she?" said Dan by way of scraping acquaintance. "A beauty, son," replied the ancient. "I mind me, son, of times I've sailed aroun' the globe on such a ship, an'—"

"Ever cooked?" interrupted his young listener.

"Aye, cooked," answered the Ancient Mariner, looking surprised. "Sharks' fins in the Chiny Sea, an' birds' nests on the Yangtsuey; curry-rice in Injy and spaghetti in It'ly; sourdough biscuit on the Yukon an'—"

"Wipe the seaweed from yer ear, Neptune!" cried Flashpan. "And come no more aboard the *Narwhal,* or I'll carve ye into Christmas beef!"

How much longer this recital would have continued history knoweth not, for at this point Dan interrupted:

"Look here! We need a cook on the *Narwhal.*"

With shrewd eyes the little man looked from Dan to ship and back, gulped, and with an effort that swelled veins on neck and forehead, managed: "*No!* Ye do?"

"Suppose you come aboard and have a talk with the captain."

"Wa-al," began Flashpan, a doubtful eye roving from his dog to his monkey. "Y'mean all three of us, I s'pose."

Dan grinned. "Why not?"

Flashpan recalled his dog from eager investigations about a rat-hole in the pier. "This here is Nugget," he explained to Dan. "Call him that account he was a lucky find, and gold clear through. Now this monk, here, his name's Placer, account he's uncertain, kind of an unknown claim, an' y'never know what he'll do. C'mon along, Nugget; we're boardin' the *Narwhal.*"

"FOR our records," said Dr. Munro when Dan had presented his find, "I must ask you a few questions."

Flashpan doffed his hat with a sweep. "At yer service, Cap'n."

"How old are you, Flashpan?" Munro began.

The new cook squinted with concentration and spat reflectively through an open porthole. "Round'bout '98 'twas, when I come of votin' age and sold my first ballot," he recalled.

"Pretty old for this job," said Munro thoughtfully.

"Old but tough," returned Flashpan with a look of secret alarm.

"But this may be a dangerous voyage."

"Dead shot with rifle and pistol," returned Flashpan swiftly.

"We-el—"

"Cook like a Frenchman, I can," persisted Flashpan. "Been around, I hev. Seen a-plenty of this here world, aye. Of an adventurin' disposition, Captain, sir—fancy-free and a-ra'rin' to go!"

"Not married, then?"

Flashpan wiped aside a suspiciously quick tear. "Mighta been a widower, Cap'n, if I'd married her—which I didn't."

Munro smiled. Flashpan gestured roundly, confidently. "I accept the berth, Cap'n, sir," said he.

"Hold on!" laughed Munro. "What's your occupation?"

"Prospectin', sir. Had me pick in five countries, not includin' Africky. Picked

Flashpan beat time with a hobnailed boot while in his hoarse

up a twelve-ounce nugget other day up Dawson way. Kept it fer a souvenir—fust one in nigh onto twenty year. Chicken-feed," he pronounced disdainfully; then with hope: "Strike it rich some day, mebbe."

"What about the monkey?"

"Placer? Oh, he'll stand the cold. Why, he got away from a circus down Iowy-way in a snowstorm—had fur like a seal when I caught him."

"All right," decided Munro, "I think you're the man for us. Now as to pay—"

With a gesture of superb disdain Flashpan waived the trifling matter. "Never earnt a dollar in me life, Cap'n," he declared. "Been diggin' fer gold nigh onto forty year. An' I got enough here,"—he slapped a clinking bag at his waist,—"and in other places," he added mysteriously, "to live comfort'ble. But it's the lookin' I like, sir, not the findin'," he confided. "Never mind the pay, sir. Jest lemme go ashore wherever we be, and try me luck, is all I ask, sir."

LATE that night, Henders crossed the gangplank unsteadily and went down the forward hatch. At the galley door he paused to rub clouded eyes and look again! Upon a table, dressed with loving care in miniature pirate's clothes, swaggered a long-tailed monkey in shiny boots. He doffed his tiny black hat, then cursed the intruder roundly. By the stove, eyes gleaming, sat a huge, bristling dog. A moment Henders stood lost in liquorous amazement, then ventured to enter his galley. On the instant its guardian bared his teeth and warned the man back with a growl.

"My own galley," hiccuped the cook, wonderingly, "an' y'wont let me in, eh?" He drew back his booted foot to kick.

"Hull on, thar!" came a commanding voice from behind. Turning, Henders found a pair of quizzical eyes regarding him from the pantry, and saw a strange figure wearing a cook's apron. In the figure's hand was a meat-cleaver.

"Who're you?" he demanded thickly.

"I be Flashpan, cook on this wessel. What're you-all doin' in my galley?"

"*Your* galley?" repeated Henders. Slowly he dropped a hand to the cabin-house top, where he had seen a belaying-pin—a weapon. His fingers fumbled for it. With a curse he realized it had disappeared almost under his eyes—and glancing up, he saw an active simian fleeing aloft, bearing away the belaying-pin.

From aft came the laughter of the crew. The ex-cook in fury brandished a ham-like hand at the vanishing thief and cursed Flashpan obscenely, demanding: "D'y'know who I am?"

Imperturbably the new cook leaned back, then with a sudden show of

voice he improvised words: *"Swing ho! We're a-sailin' for treasure!"*

ferocity jumped forward, flourishing his cleaver. Startled, Henders retreated to the gangplank, teetering as he sought to balance himself. Then he slipped—from the arms of Bacchus into those of Oceanus. The chill sobering waters closed gently above his head.

When he rose into view, "I know ye now," cried Flashpan. "Wipe the seaweed from yer ear! An' when ye've cooled off a bit, Neptune, ye'll find yer truck on yonder dock. And come no more aboard the *Narwhal* or I'll carve ye into Christmas beef!"

So, by cunning, and force wisely expended, Flashpan came into despotic domination of the *Narwhal's* galley. It was soon apparent that this was all for the best. Upon their hooks the once dirty pans hung glistening like mirrors; fresh paint covered the long-neglected shelves, from which newly washed cups swung to the ship's movement.

Dan, passing the galley, fell back in amazement.

From his pack and from an old leather trunk which Flashpan had brought aboard, a multiplicity of objects had emerged to decorate that culinary stronghold: A brace of pistols hung above the stove, flanked by a bowie-knife in a long sheath, and an old Sharps rifle with ornately carved stock. On a nail several bullet-molds hung by strings. A pair of spurs jingled above the door, surmounted by a horseshoe.

However bizarre his ideas of decoration, Flashpan proved his cook's skill at the first meal. Biscuits, brown and feather-light, appeared in magic quantity from his oven. Roast fowl, cooked to a turn, steamed upon the great oaken cabin table, and the cheering aroma of coffee, brewed with masterly touch, arose.

After dinner, in a hoarse but not unpleasant voice, Flashpan demonstrated another side of his character. Accompanying himself upon a battered guitar, produced magically from that all-encompassing trunk, he sang:

Oh-h, I been cook on a four-wheeled schooner,
A cook on the lone prairie-e-e,
I've cooked and I've fried, an' dang near died,
In many a far countre-e-e,
But who'd have knowed, that afore it snowed,
I'd be cook on a schooner at sea!

SOME hours later, on the rise of the tide, the *Norwhal* moved from her wharf and soon rode the first long swell of the high seas. Thus in a vessel hardly larger than that in which a Genoese discovered a New World four centuries and more earlier, Munro set sail into the white sanctity of the Arctic, whose grim

Across the graves of those who had died that food might go farther, appeared the vanguard of the caribou-herds.

CHAPTER VI

The Hunger Camp

gods have guarded its secrets from the beginnings of recorded time.

With a last salute to land from her air-whistle and a blast on her patent fog-horn the *Narwhal* went forth at sundown upon her Odyssey. Her red and green side-lights burned brightly. Her iron prow clove the waters with a gentle hiss. Her new rope creaked and her sails bellied out full of the wind that snapped the flag being lowered from her truck.

Aft at the wheel Dr. James Munro leaned upon its spokes, a different and younger-looking man than he had been ashore. From somewhere he had produced a fringed buckskin coat, ornamented with colored quillwork, gift of some far-away Indian friend. He made a fine picturesque figure garbed thus.

On the rail near the forward cabin-house, Beth La Salle gazed into the mysterious distance, recollection strong within her. An immense full moon hung as if suspended from the crosstrees like some great brass gong waiting to be struck. Under such a moon she had last seen the man she loved going out into the Arctic night. . . .

A little later when Dan came on deck, and would have spoken, Beth raised a hand for silence. From the bow came the strains of a guitar. In the shadow of the fore-sail, with his pets worshipfully mute at shoulder and knee, sat Flashpan, beating time with a hobnailed boot while in his hoarse voice he improvised words to a nameless but swinging melody:

"Swing ho! Swing ho! We're a-sailin' for treasure,
We'll sink our shafts deep in a far new countree.
Sail on! Sail on! There's go-o-ld without measure,
For men who will dig in the far new countree!"

NIGHT and day Kioga drove his men now, for a visible skin of ice covered the river; but at last the thickening ice cut through one of the craft. That marked the end of river travel. Nature, hitherto neutral, was now leagued against them.

With deep regret Kioga saw his canoes drawn upon the bank and hidden in the brush. For all the toil of the portages, the going had been swift where the rivers were deep. Henceforward, it would be even more toilsome, as they continued the northward march on foot. When the march was resumed, none was without a share of the vital load. The order of Indian march was maintained as before, save that now the dogs drew the travois. Thus, for a week, with ice in the rivers and the snow not deep enough for sledge travel, they moved very slowly —and at a time when haste was vital.

But the time was not wasted. About the camp-fires there was great activity. Of branches steamed to shape, and strips of moose-hide, they made long snowshoes. Of driftwood, found near the river, they made sledge-runners. And while Tokala watched with fascinated eyes, the Snow Hawk plaited several strips of moose-hide into a tapered lash some fifteen feet long. In the firelight the resulting whip was a beautiful russet brown and it coiled from Kioga's hand like some sinuous snake.

During that night it snowed heavily, and in the morning the dogs were harnessed. Upon the sledges were laid the belongings of the band, lashed securely against the inevitable upsets. Upon their feet the Indians fixed the ready-made snowshoes.

Then, with a shout and resounding crack of Kioga's whip, they were off, the dog-teams first, hitched in tandem for easy passage through the woods along the river. Before the dogs went two

strong young men on snowshoes, taking their turn at breaking trail. Behind the sledges came the remainder of the band, scattered along. Well-provided though they now were in equipment, they must be alert to kill meat. The dogs would eat in two weeks all they could haul, and their back-loads of dried meat were necessarily light.

FOR Tokala, this journey was pure ecstasy. Into his healing lungs he drank the clean free air of the open hills. Behind him he had already put all thought of the poverty and deadly labor which had scarred his short life. By night no more the close quarters of airless dormitory, but above his head the illimitable vault of heaven, hung with the blazing northern stars. And in the north sky at night the unspeakable beauty of the aurora, warm green, pale yellow, sheerest silver, moved from east to west like a host of invisible warriors, bearing a forest of flashing spears.

Each evening the women put out cunning snares and caught many small fur-bearers; white foxes, hares, a few mink and weasels. Late one afternoon, poised upon a ridge fifty yards away, a golden-eyed lynx, gray-white and beautiful, watched them pass. From Kioga's ready bow leaped a slim swift shaft which struck the snarling cat through eye and brain. Of the lynx meat they ate at the sunset meal, and found it very good. The richly marked skin was added to that of some white foxes, and a fine outfit made for Tokala.

The sick boy was showing improvement. The puny frame had straightened. A delicate color came and went now in the once pallid face. His endurance had also grown, and whenever duty permitted, he ran beside the mighty Snow-Hawk. And into those eager little ears Kioga told many a tale of his own exciting boyhood!

Tales of a lithe brown-skinned boy, hotly pursued over hill and dale by the gaunt wolves of Ga-Hu-Ti, forty in a pack; of hairbreadth escapes from tiger's claw and snow-leopard's fang; of strange adventure on the foaming rivers of mysterious Nato'wa, in the thunder of her mighty cataracts. Tales that are told about the lodge-fires of those distant Indian tribesmen, of coastal Nato'wa.

He told Tokala of how Mokuyi had given him a bear-cub, Aki; and of how Aki had led him among the bears, with whom he spent years of his early life, returning to the village possessed of a woodcraft surpassing the cunning of the subtlest hunter. He told of how Yanu, the fierce old she-bear, had spilled her life-blood defending him against his wild enemies; of Aki, faithful guardian of his childhood, upon whose shaggy belly oft his head was pillowed. Of Mika the silver-coated, a white-toothed puma raised from cubhood, with whom he had hunted in concert, so that no beast in all the wilderness was safe from their onset; and of many another fierce pet that shared his friendship in those days.

And at sunset of the day he had killed the lynx, he tossed a surprise into Tokala's lap, a half-grown lynx kitten, one of a litter he had discovered hidden away somewhere. Indeed, life had become very good for Tokala the Fox!

Each day, now, the party drew closer to its first objective, the Arctic Ocean. And Tokala—who could know little of the terrific difficulties and dangers of the journey over ice and stormy waters yet before them—dreamed eagerly of this promised land of Nato'wa which Kioga so vividly described. . . .

And now gaunt famine dogged their trail; for the game which had sustained them disappeared. Only whitefish, caught on the bone hooks through a hole in the ice, sustained them. Came a day when even this source of supply failed.

They ate bark and tender twigs. From the rocks they took an occasional bit of *tripe de roche,* the wild plant which has sustained many a starving party in the north. A dwarf variety of Labrador tea was found also, from which they brewed a spirit-lifting draft. But it was not enough.

GREAT age, combined with near-starvation, struck down old Bull-calf in his ninety-third year. Sits-in-Sun found him dead, wrapped in his blanket, facing the southeast. Just as the sun rose, her cracked and quavering voice rose in the mourning-cry. All day the aged crone wept, bewailing her dead; nor at nightfall would she be comforted.

"Three-score and ten summers have I been his sits-beside-him woman. He loved to dress my hair. All those early years I rode at his side, bearing his shield. Together we lived the old life and saw the buffalo pass. We shared the poverty given us by white men. We learned of Nato'wa, land of the Indian. But—*ai-i-i,* too late! Bull-calf has gone away. I will walk no more, but sit beside him as

before, so that if a time comes that he wakes, he will find me there."

"Mother," protested Kioga, "we do not wish you to die."

"My son," she answered solemnly, "I am Sits-in-Sun. I have spoken."

The Snow Hawk said no more, but aided by several of the band he erected a tall scaffold of new-cut limbs. Upon this, after singing and eulogizing, they laid the remains of Bull-calf, swathed in blanket and with face painted. Beside him they placed his pipe, his knife, the quiver and bow with which he had hunted in his youth. And upon his burial scaffold they hung his cherished shield.

Unnoticed by old Sits-in-Sun, Kioga laid a bone needle, a skinning-knife and a few personal things at her side, along with a piece of dried meat. These were to accompany her on a journey, longer than this march had been, for he knew she would never rise again.

The band then quietly withdrew, leaving Sits-in-Sun chanting the old death-songs of her tribe. As they turned a bend in the river and looked back, she still knelt immobile. A fold of the dead chief's blanket flapped in the sad wind. Sits-in-Sun did not move. The shield swung gently, flashing in the sunlight.

The following days diminished the weakening party by several of its number. Crow Man, sixty-nine, passed to his ancestors, and Three Scalps, who could not bear to see him go alone, followed a little later. She-Is-Swift gave up the ghost one night at dusk. . . .

Faced with the task of providing meat for all these famished mouths in a land named for its scarcity, Kioga's eye often fell upon the dogs. But if he slew them, he knew, they must leave behind much that was valuable. So long as strength held out, he determined to avoid loss of a single dog.

ONE night camp was pitched in a copse of dwarfed trees. Scooping away the snow with snowshoes, the men cleared a circle and helped the women raise a wigwam of branches chinked with snow.

Speech came seldom, and gloomily then. Those who could, sat erect, warming themselves at their tiny fire—a precious core of heat, since it constituted all they had been able to find of dry wood. The Barren Ground is well named.

They looked at one another, at the discernible sag of the cheeks, the emaciation which drew the transparent skin tight from cheek-bone to cheek-bone. Their skulls seemed barely covered. Their hair hung down like black snakes, and they appeared so wild and terrible, that they no longer looked at one another.

The dogs, as if possessed of second sight, evaded the men, huddled together outside the tent in a hollow and moved wraith-like about, howling, fixing the camp with their gleaming eyes. They too were waiting the end. They too were hungry.

Then to Kioga came Wounded Knee, who gazed long into the fire, ere speaking in these words:

"My eyes are dim, Kioga. But I see straight. And this is what I see: We old folk hold you back." Kioga made as if to interrupt, but the old man checked him with hand upheld. "Hear me, my son. We have talked, we old ones. We have counseled together. And this we say: Leave us behind. Go on alone, else our children will never see this land of Nato'wa. We wish our children to live, that they may reach this land of happy hunting."

SNOW HAWK thought a time in silence, before answering:

"Elder brothers, hear my words: We younger ones have good ears. But we cannot hear what you have just said. We hunger. But we are men—and men of our people know how to starve. If we find no meat tomorrow, we will find it the next day. I say again, we have good ears; but we cannot hear the words you have just spoken."

Kioga turned to the younger men, as if to seek confirmation of those for whom he spoke. A deep *"Hau! Hau!"* answered him.

Wounded Knee said no more, but returned to the circle of councilors, who numbered four, the last of the very old people.

A little later Kioga drew his blanket about his eyes to seek an hour's sleep. With a start he awoke, and it seemed that he had slept but a moment. He glanced over toward where the old councilors had sat, then came erect. He saw they were not lying with feet to the blaze as customarily.

The four chiefs were missing. Rising, he went to the entrance of the lodge, which flapped, and pushed aside the skin. White glittering granules of snow sifted in, and his breath was like steam in the bitter cold. Outside, all was black, the snow hissing down venomously.

He felt something fluttering against his face, and reached forward to seize an upright stick. Taking it inside, he found it to be the feathered *coup*-stick of Wounded Knee.

Waking his hunters, Kioga told them: "The councilors have gone out alone." Then he rushed out, ten braves at his heels. The snow stung like shot, blinding them. There was no way to follow a trail. So said the braves, but Kioga did not hear. He was already far out on the unseen trail; for to his ears had come a sound, faint but familiar, which he followed.

It was a death-song, rising monotonously on the whistling wind, and fading. A little way he went, then checked. The chant came from an opposite direction, toward which he turned—only to hear it from a third point. Then from yet a fourth came that deep chanting, fainter now, bewildering, coming from every direction.

Kioga paused, shouted the names of the councilors. The driven snow stung his palate. He called no more, for now he understood. Turning back, he sought a scent of smoke, found it, and on its thread returned to the camp. Inside lay the hunters, hardly able to move after their few exertions. And from without came only the moan of wind, the slash of snow. If the Snow Hawk went out again, and were lost—all these within the lodge were as dead, for none but he could now move about. And so he sat gazing at the door through which the four old men had passed.

THE storm abated. Morning dawned clear, brilliant, sharply cold. A little rested, the braves accompanied Kioga slowly out. They found the old councilors—at widely separated points, frozen stiff and buried in snow. They found them easily, by the markers over their icy graves. Above each man—except Wounded Knee—fluttering bright red and yellow and blue in the reddish morning sunrise, was an upright *coup*-stick. Wounded Knee was never found. He had left his *coup*-stick before the lodge where Kioga found it the previous night.

Wise councilors, cunning councilors! Knowing they would be followed, they had separated, singing their death-chants as they went, the better to discourage pursuit. Weary at last, one by one and alone, they had dug deep their *coup*-sticks and squatted down, never to rise. They had sacrificed themselves for their people, that these might carry on unhampered. Wounded Knee, Bets-His-Shirt, Chases-the-Cow, Iron Horse: four brave, old, great-hearted men, tottering into Eternity in the best tradition of their race!

All that day in the hunger-lodge the pleading drum of Moon's Son, young medicine-man and self-appointed visionary of the band, beat with growing weakness. Stupor had claimed some of the lodge's occupants. The teeth of Tokala chattered with cold and weakness. The shadow of death lay across that lone lodge of starvation, waiting to creep in when the diminished firewood should at last be exhausted.

AND that afternoon as if in answer to the singing of Moon's Son, and across the graves of those who had died that food might go farther, appeared the vanguard of the migrating caribou-herds. First a small band, loping slowly along, then scattered groups, later small herds, then larger, until at last, as far as the eye could reach they came, the clattering of their antlers creating a roar that could be heard for miles.

With the coming of caribou the cruel gods of the North must have smiled, for of all who heard the animals pass, only Kioga had strength even to come forth and look at them, then throw wide the lodge-flap that others might see and perchance take strength from the sight. And it was a cruel game starvation played with those who watched the Snow Hawk.

With dragging feet he pursued the active animals, saw them coming on every side, smelled the mellow scent of their endless numbers and heard the clack of antler and hoof on the hard snow. Never hitherto had he taken account of his strength. Always, like the flow of a mighty cataract it had been there, in boundless tide when needed. No man had ever successfully challenged it; and no beast in far Nato'wa was his equal, when to strength he added his cunning.

But now Kioga knew his weakness. He who once could have run a caribou down in fair chase now crept upon the herds in vain. Those who watched lost heart.

Kioga had fallen, and now lay quiet.

Then of a sudden Tokala shouted weakly. Moon's Son's drum picked up its faltering beat, which rose to a swift tattoo, at what the medicine-man saw.

Forth from the Snow Hawk's prone position went his bony hand. A caribou bull, wounded in battle with a fellow bull,

had stood bleeding on this spot. Kioga was crushing the frozen nourishment in his teeth. Little by little some of his strength returned. At length he slowly took up his bow and nocked an arrow. He drew the cord. He held his point upon the nearest bull. The string twanged, loud and vibrant. The bull leaped high, breaking its neck in its fall, and lay dead, pierced through the heart.

Again and again the bended bow, the musical note of plucked cord, the jar of the recoiling arc, as the feathered reeds whipped forth, dropping each a running caribou, until the hunter's quiver lay empty at his hand. But twenty fat animals lay dead in the snow.

Soon the lodge was filled with the aroma of simmering roast ribs and tender brisket; plump tongues were hung to smoke; heads were roasted whole and the fatty nose-gristle eaten first.

It was a great feast. The bones were full of rich marrow, and there was so much meat that already the dogs were gorged to repletion, and struggling to devour yet more. When they felt able, the hunters went forth now and shot down caribou as long as their arrows held out, then pulled them free of the dead animals and shot again.

So from starvation to luxurious living Kioga's band went in one day.

And over the old councilors the feathers fluttered. . . .

Now the sun rose above the southern horizon upon a happy camp. The brown caribou-skin lodges hugged the snow under blue plumes of smoke that rose vertically and feathered away southward. The dogs tussled and wrestled and lolled about, tongues hanging contentedly.

Treachery, self-sacrifice, famine and surfeit and death had visited the camp many times. But returning to the tents next night, Kioga heard a thin wail. Entering, he learned that Grass Girl, wife of the delighted young Moon's Son, had gone out to bring in meat and been absent overlong. Uneasiness gripped the women until she was seen returning slowly with a back-load of meat, steadied with one hand, while in the other she tenderly bore her first-born—a healthy, screaming boy-child. With the easy *accouchement* of the native mother, she had been delivered of her child beside a caribou carcass. Life was balancing the scale.

The little newcomer was given its secret name. What that name was I cannot tell, for the baby-name is never spoken, lest evil spirits annoy the child. But to the warriors Grass Girl's son was thenceforward known as Plenty Meat.

CHAPTER VII

The Frozen Desert

THE caribou horde had come and passed south. But the sledges were loaded with dried meat, and the dogs so glutted they scarce could walk. Preparations were being made for a quick departure with early morning. In his tent Kioga was whetting his arrows sharp and affixing a wrist-strap to the whip when a sudden violent clamor from the dogs sent him bounding forth, whip in hand, pausing not even to don his caribou-skin coat.

Their situation was critical: the wind was bitterly cold and there was nothing left of which to make a fire; they hungered terribly, and the meat was all gone. But push on they must.

The mêlée raged fiercely a hundred feet from the tents, in full view under the silver flood of the moon's light. The unlucky dogs contended with foes more dread than one another. Two white wolves, doubtless having scented fresh meat, fought silently among them. Gaunt from long running, trained to leather hardness by their pursuit of the vanished caribou, their onset was in marked contrast to the resistance by the sluggish dogs, gorged with meat and further hampered by the dangling traces.

One of the dogs already lay twitching, mangled and torn, and as the Snow Hawk bore down upon them, the male wolf of the pair, with three snaps, ripped open another dog in an instant.

Rushing from their tents, the Indians now learned the true function of that long lash which the Snow Hawk carried. It was as much a weapon as a bow. Even as they watched, forth sang the unerring plaited thong, quick as a cobra's strike, and as deadly almost, to draw blood and leave a deep gash wherever it touched a wolf. The dogs, with courage renewed by the presence of an ally, attacked more boldly, and to better effect. The wolves, their fighting edge dulled by the scourging of the lash, suddenly turned tail and were away, dogs in pursuit. But the heavy dogs were no match for the speed of their wild brothers, and soon returned to camp, to lie about licking their wounds, of which one died during the night.

The party proceeded next morning at somewhat reduced pace, owing to the loss of two dogs. Well on their way, one of the wolves was found dead, frozen stiff on the plain. The body was cut up, thawed out, and fed to the dogs.

IT was only a few miles to the Arctic Ocean now. Fed and clothed, the band moved steadily on, several of the men aiding the teams, especially that which drew the sledge heavily loaded with *dépouille*—the pure back-fat of the caribou.

They came, that night, to an abandoned Eskimo camp, where they slept, and on the morrow changed their course, running on smooth shore ice now. Hitherto they had run the dogs in tandem, but now they changed to the fan formation, and with the dogs thus hitched abreast made better time. Several days found them in the area near which Kioga had first encountered the scientist Dr. James Munro after his abandonment on the ice.

The Snow Hawk was mindful now of how his hazardous journey to the mainland had been interrupted a year earlier when a white bear, marauding by nature, and hungry besides, had destroyed his camp. Accordingly he cautioned his hunters concerning the risks attendant on ice-travel, with emphasis on the huge white wanderers which have clawed and despoiled their way into the diaries of every Northern expedition. From this time on an alternate sentry guarded the camp at all hours.

The sentry it was who entered the snow-house that night with word that a sledging party had halted a mile distant, whether with hostile or friendly intent he could not determine. Seated before the oil-lamps with Tokala, Kioga drew on his furs and emerged—to see a band of Eskimo at some distance, pointing to the camp and evidently at disagreement among themselves on some point.

Gesturing, Kioga observed that his greeting was returned by one of the strangers, who pointedly threw aside his weapons, and holding aloft both hands, advanced halfway toward the camp. Acting in like manner, Kioga came to within a hundred paces of the man in the semi-darkness. The Eskimo shouted something in an unknown tongue. Having no other alternative, Kioga called back a greeting in English. Little expecting to hear an intelligible answer, he started when English syllables, far from perfect, but plain enough, fell from the lips of the Eskimo.

"We Eskimo. Kamotok, me. Look for seal; no find him yet."

At utterance of that name the Snow Hawk strained his eyes across the ice, then hurried forward. The Eskimo, suspecting treachery, turned to move away, when the Snow Hawk checked him with a question.

"Where is Lualuk, of the one hand, Kamotok?"

In surprise, the Eskimo wheeled.

"Who are you who know Lualuk?"

"I am Kioga, friend of Dok-Ta-Mun," answered the Snow Hawk, using the name by which Dr. Munro had been known to his Eskimo dog-drivers.

KAMOTOK'S subsequent actions, under constant watchful observation by the curious members of Kioga's band, startled the Indians. He shouted aloud in his excitement, threw back a few words to his friends at the sledge; they instantly hurried yelling across the ice in the wake of their leader, who was rushing upon Kioga.

The Indians snatched up their weapons and ran to meet the Eskimo, ready to meet force with force. But when they arrived on the scene, to their amazement they found Kioga the center of an enthusiastic mob. Kamotok was pumping his hand and plying him with a hundred eager questions, with the Snow Hawk laughing at their enthusiasm and answering as fast as he was able, while one-handed Lualuk anxiously awaited an opportunity to speak.

HAVING made his Indians known to Kamotok's people, and allayed somewhat the Eskimo distrust of Indians —their hereditary foes—Kioga next invited the Eskimo to their lodges, where all partook heartily of the prized back-fat of the caribou.

Influenced by this good cheer and the friendship of their leaders, round-faced Eskimos and lean-jawed red men were soon at ease in each others' strange society. From Kamotok—whose long assistance to the American scientist had given him his working knowledge of English—the Indians learned why Kioga was so highly esteemed in this remote corner at the top of the earth. Lualuk held forth the stump of his hand and jabbered something at Kamotok, who turned to the migrant band.

"He say, tell you Kioga kill Club-foot."

"Who was Club-foot?" piped up Tokala the Fox, who had drunk all this in, in silence. The Eskimo grinned down at the boy. "White bear, ver-ry big. Bite off Lualuk's hand. Kioga kill with knife. See!" He showed the boy a strip of bear-skin sewn into his right glove. "I take this from that big Club-foot. I am lucky all time—kill plenty seal now. Nanuk—him ver-ry strong. Not so strong as Kioga!"

Thus, from the lips of an Eskimo, the band learned a little more of the strange career of their friend and leader the Snow Hawk.

Thereafter Kioga talked long and earnestly with Kamotok, of ice-conditions north and west, and of the possibilities for seal- and walrus-hunting. He learned much; but of the area which most concerned him Kamotok could tell him nothing, for there were lines beyond which the Eskimo never went, and of any large land north of the Siberian coast the man was completely ignorant.

But the information Kioga received concerning the Eskimo method of hide boat-making was invaluable, and the gifts from the generous Eskimo band almost as much so. Among these were a few lamps for burning seal-oil, to light and warm their igloos on the way; two ice-axes; several fine sealing-harpoons, one with a steel head; and several lengths of seal-hide rope. Out of his great good will Kamotok would have included his prized rifle, but this the Snow Hawk would not accept. Thus far their primitive weapons had kept them in meat. Deprived of his gun Kamotok might perish, and many of his people with him.

In return for these gifts Kioga emptied his pockets of their coins, a small initialed pen-knife, a gold watch and sundry other little articles. These he deposited before the glistening eyes of Kamotok.

"For you and your people, in return," he said. "And now, we have one other need. For five good strong dogs, we will give as much caribou fat as your men here can bear away on their backs."

Kamotok turned to one of his hunters, and spoke a few words. The man's face was wreathed in a great smile as he agreed eagerly. Turning back to Kioga, Kamotok said simply: "It is done."

Both sides were well pleased with the arrangement. With fresh dogs, the Indian band could make up for those lost. The Eskimo, to whom nothing is so necessary as animal fat, were delighted.

THE following morning the Eskimo saw the departure of Snow Hawk and his strange band, and looked with wonder after him who spoke of a land of which they knew nothing.

Once again possessed of fast strong dogs and well-equipped for their forthcoming battle with the ice, Kioga and his party drove their animals onward. They spent the night in comfort beside their seal-oil lamps in the shelter of a snow-hut lined with caribou-skin, and built like the Eskimo dwellings they had left.

Only by adopting the ways of people who made the ice their home could they hope to survive where so many others, better equipped and prepared, had perished. Accordingly their dress was now adapted to conditions on the ice. All but the most necessary sledging equipment was discarded, until in the end they retained but the Eskimo minimum: meat, fur bags to sleep in, and the weapons and clothing on their backs.

Within their well-made igloo of snow-blocks, men and women and dogs alike slept together to take advantage of the common warmth. Again they were entirely dependent on their hunting weapons for meat, for of provisions they could carry at most but two weeks' supply. Where the ice was broken up by wind or pressure they took an occasional seal with the harpoon. Kioga taught the Indians how to be constantly alert for seal-holes in solid ice—those under-ice chambers, gnawed from below, through which the seal breathes. Thus they had an occasional if precarious source of fresh meat. Nothing was wasted, nothing thrown away. The seal-skins became part of their garments, The bones were ground with blood and made into thick, nourishing soup; the least palatable parts were fed to the dogs. And the seal-oil kept their lamps alight. Thus they existed on the frozen desert, beneath which in frigid water, lie the bones of many whose expeditions were far better found than this wild nomads' camp.

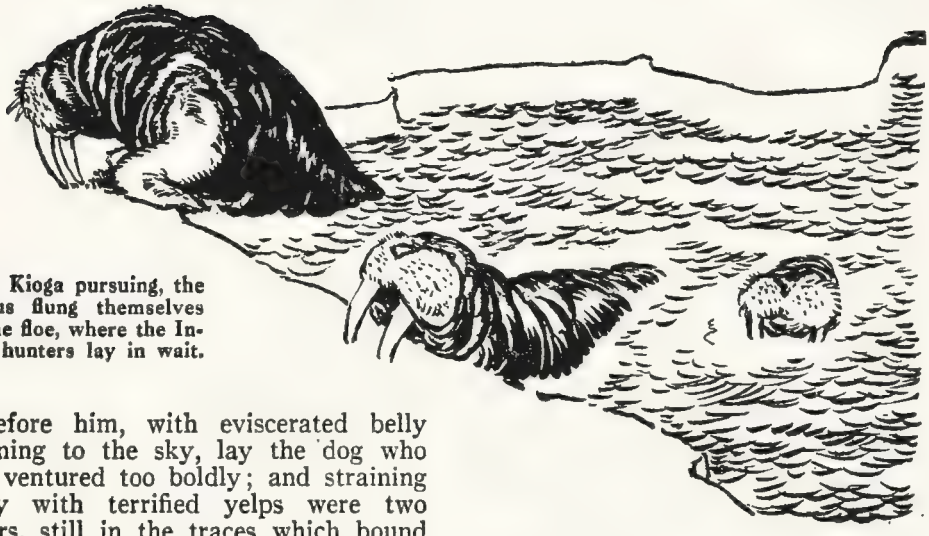
One morning the band had harnessed the dogs, preparing to hitch them to the sledges, when with an excited clamor the animals suddenly took off at a furious pace. Struggling vainly to hold them back, Tokala was dragged along behind, sprawled on his little fur-clad belly and gripping the trace, twisted round his wrists.

Almost as soon as the dogs, the trained nostrils of the Snow Hawk drank in the scent.

"Bear!" he cried over one shoulder as he picked up an ice-ax from the sledge and bounded after the dogs. "Bring harpoons and bows!"

Hard on the heels of the huskies pressed the Snow Hawk, overhauling them at last amid a jagged mass of rough ice, at the center of which, in a depression surrounded by gleaming pinnacles, stood an ice-bear of the breed known as Nanuk, the tiger of the Arctic.

ITS short heavy ears were screwed back. Saliva dripped from the yellow bared incisors and froze instantly like spun glass. The close-set little eyes blazed diabolically in the triangular head, which almost touched the ice, effectively covering the long cream-yellow throat. Beneath the long high quarters the bulging muscles rolled as Nanuk swayed upon the rigid pillars of his broad and shaggy limbs.



With Kioga pursuing, the walrus flung themselves on the floe, where the Indian hunters lay in wait.

Before him, with eviscerated belly yawning to the sky, lay the dog who had ventured too boldly; and straining away with terrified yelps were two others, still in the traces which bound them to their unlucky fellow, from whose carcass the bear's immense red-stained paw pressed the dark blood.

His gaze already darting about seeking Tokala, Kioga had advanced to where the dogs ringed the bear at a respectful distance. And then the Snow Hawk, to whom fear was unknown, felt his blood run cold:

Prone before the bear, within range of the curving claws of that massive hairy forepaw, lay Tokala the Fox.

For an instant Kioga thought him dead, then realized that the boy's eyes, wide and staring, were fixed in dread fascination upon the bear. He called a quick low warning: "Tokala—lie still and as if dead. Do not answer me. But when the arrow strikes in and the bear turns—jump and run!"

An iron-headed shaft already strained against Kioga's cord. Came a twang as the bow hurled its bolt. The bear grunted a muffled roar and snapped back at the wooden agony skewering his loin. Another arrow sank into its side, and at point-blank range Kioga pumped yet two more deep in to the feathers.

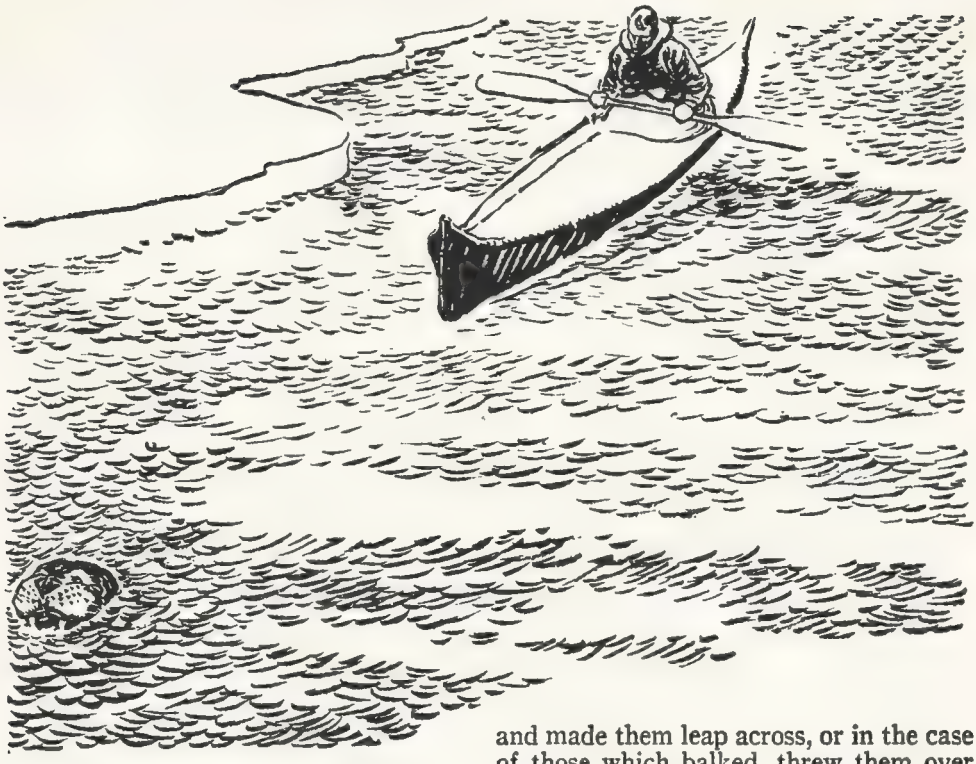
Tokala had now risen on hands and knees. For the first time Kioga realized why he could not jump and run as instructed. His foot was caught and twisted up in the dead dog's trace. As the bear wheeled in a circle, snapping and tearing at the arrows, the boy's movement caught his eye. Pausing only to smash an attacking dog into a pulp, the bear rushed upon Tokala.

Simultaneously Kioga resorted to the sole remaining means of saving Tokala—his long sharp knife. In two bounds from behind he was fastened to the bear's shaggy shoulders. The plunge, plunge, of his dripping blade checked the beast in mid-charge, just as the first of the Indians topped the nearest ice pinnacle.

Shaking itself within its loose thick skin, the dying animal reared and fell back, seeking to crush its assailant. But as it fell, Kioga writhed from under and laid hold of the forgotten ice-ax. One mighty chop upon the skull, quick as the fall of a meteorite, and the bear sank down, prey to the frenzied worrying of the dogs already swarming over the lifeless foe.

Shouting and gesticulating, the Indians scrambled excitedly down into the little amphitheater of ice and surrounded the Snow Hawk, who knelt beside Tokala, feeling the boy's ankle.

As soon as the women came up, the clicking knives were busy again, separating the bear from its heavy skin. One of the warriors plunged deep his knife, and reaching in, drew forth the bear's



heart, of which he ate a small piece and handed it around, among the others. Thus, by the logic of the Indian hunter, they partook of the animal's courage. The long claws were cut off and later strung on rawhide, which in turn was sewn upon Kioga's parka.

Again the dogs were well fed, this time upon bear-haunch; while the Indians regaled themselves upon the thick bear-liver cooked in a seal-oil flame.

The Snow Hawk, as he ate, thought back a few short months to a time when he had walked in the busy marts of civilization. And he who had eaten ten-course dinners, drunk from priceless crystal and wiped his lips on snowy napery, now bit off another piece of bear-liver; and when he had finished, he licked his fingers and quenched his thirst with melted Arctic ice. He had but one regret concerning the material things he had put behind: and that was for the tingling shower of a modern bathroom. Neither he nor his companions had bathed for many weeks.

LEVEL ice, once attained, offered no obstacles to the rapid passage of the Indian band, now hardened by exposure and strengthened by an abundance of meat. When an occasional fissure yawned before them, they unhitched the dogs and made them leap across, or in the case of those which balked, threw them over bodily, whereafter the sledges were hauled across. But hummocky ice gave them exhausting work smashing a way through with their ice-axes. Men as well as dogs, here strained against the sledge-traces; and where the ice towered about them on every side, shutting them in, they traveled by dead reckoning or by watching the stars.

Even worse peril than ice itself was its lack. One night clouds shut out the stars and a milder wind blew, softening the surface. Where the sledges had slipped along easily before, they now sank deep and the dogs likewise floundered up to their bellies in soft slush. Some of the meat was transferred to back-packs but much more had to be abandoned. During that night, while taking a rest enforced by sheer weariness, the dogs became restless and whined uneasily, awakening Kioga.

He was soon conscious of movement of the ice underfoot, and of an occasional ominous crunching which passed near by and moved into the distance. Wind and unseasonable warmth were combining to break up the ice on which they moved—the field on which they had slept was in perceptible motion, and it was no time for sleep.

"Throw the meat from the sledges," was the first order Kioga gave. "We

come soon to open water, where there will be meat in plenty." In view of the unexpected break-up of the ice, he knew now that they were not many miles from the warm currents which temper the climate of Nato'wa.

With the sledges lightened, they pushed on anew. Everywhere fissures now appeared, with open water between. Where these were very wide, they moved along the edge until they found a cake or pan of ice sufficiently large to bear their weight—then ferried across the watery lanes. It was unmitigated toil now, but none complained.

AT the edge of an open lane, Kioga finally called a halt to allow the stragglers to come up. And now the wind changed again, frost set in, and two inches of ice—enough to lock in the floating pans, but not enough for safe sledge-travel—formed on the surface. Their situation was critical. The wind was bitterly cold. There was nothing left of which to make a fire. They hungered terribly from the toil of this endless march; and the meat was all gone.

But in the North those who turn back are almost always lost. Push on they must, trusting to Kioga's judgment that they must soon come to the open water —and seals. Kioga ordered the dogs harnessed again and turned to his drivers.

"You, Buffalo Child, drive three hundred paces to the south. You, Crow Man, as many toward the north. I, with my team, will take the middle course. The women and aged will go first, scattered, that we may see them safe." Turning to these: "Move swiftly and do not once stop. If mishap befall one, let all the others continue on their way. For if one fall through the ice, surely two would break it in the more easily. If it be the will of the Great Ones, we shall pass; if not— Give me your hands, each one. We have come far together."

Quietly all shook hands. Then, one by one, well separated, the women and the old man moved fan-wise out across the thin field. When they were well past halfway over, the teams drew apart, and to the crack of the whips and the shouts of the drivers the sledges started cautiously over the ice. Thus, for perhaps half the distance to solid footing—when of a sudden the dreaded cry echoed from mouth to mouth:

"Run! *Run!* The ice breaks up!"

Obedient to orders, those in the front hurried on as fast as their limbs would carry them. Old Four Braids, unsteady at best, went through to the knees, but dragged himself flat along the ice, rose and continued on. Under the sledges the thin ice was quaking and sagging. Wild with fear, the dogs galloped with the lashes hissing over their heads, and the *"Hai! Hai!—Hai! Hai!"* of the drivers beating into their ears. On Crow Man's team one dog slipped and was dragged a hundred yards before he could attain his feet. Buffalo Child, feeling the ice going beneath him, ran safely away to one side, decreasing the weight in the area of his sledge, which slid swiftly on, passing into a zone of comparative safety.

Kioga alone, with his lesser team of but four dogs, where the others numbered five, seemed in difficulty. To the Indians who could pause and watch, the flat sameness of the ice appeared to be sinking in a long concavity where the weight of the sledge, man and dogs bore upon the thin skin blanketing the sea. They could hear the pistol-shot reports of his moose-hide lash, and his low appeals to the dogs, straining every sinew to obey. They saw him, without pausing, dash piece after piece of its load from the sledge, until it was quite empty save for Tokala, who rode white-faced, clutching his lynx-kitten to his breast.

With horror they saw disaster creeping upon the fast-moving sledge. Just behind the Snow Hawk in the wake of the sledge the ice was cracking in his footsteps. Once he went in with one leg, but seizing the sledge drew himself along behind it so that his pounding feet might not strain the ice again. Then behind the sledge itself, like a scratch which follows the diamond drawn across glass, there appeared a continuous break in the ice.

KIOGA bent, grasped Tokala by the wrist, swung him back, and with a mighty toss flung him skimming along the ice, still clutching his lynx-kitten, into the arms of waiting Indians.

But under the pressure of his exertion the sledge grated harshly and went under astern. Checked, the dogs piled up, fell in a tangle. Sea-water welled up from every break in the sagging skin-ice. Kioga slashed at the traces with his sharp knife to separate dogs from sledge. And then, with a great splash, it happened.

The sledge sank like a stone, dragging man and entangled struggling dogs into

the hole which had claimed it. The yapping of the animals was quenched in sea-water. Silence reigned over the tragedy spot. Only the squeaking of the small-ice about the hole marked the sinking of man and team.

Came the wail of a heartbroken boy, shrill and distinct on the frosty air, as Tokala the Fox shouted again and again the name of Kioga, his idol.

A moment suspense and the realization of dread tragedy held every soul in thrall. Then of a sudden Tokala glimpsed what the rest overlooked, and his shout of discovery broke the spell.

Ranging across the ice was a limp wet length of leathern whip-thong, one end lapped twice about an icy pinnacle where it was swiftly freezing. Even as they watched, the lash snapped taut. Out of the steely sea appeared a wet and soggy mitten, followed by the streaming face and head of the Snow Hawk.

IN an instant the Indians had grasped the lash and were straining to draw him upon solid ice. This was no simple feat, for he had hold of the dogs' trace. But many hands accomplished the seemingly impossible. When Kioga attained his feet, he in turn dragged three half-drowned, coughing dogs to safety.

The sledge, however, had gone to the bottom and taken one dog with it. Thereafter it was not an easy task to dry out Kioga's sea-soaked clothing in the heat of their tiny oil-flame; but after a delay of several hours it was done. Preparing to start anew, the Snow Hawk was attracted by the howling of the dogs he had saved. They had dropped to their bellies to rest and were frozen to the ice beyond all possibility of self-liberation. Ensued another delay while the band chopped them carefully free, tended and bound up their sore feet and removed some of the ice from their coats. Finally they were moving again. . . .

Ahead was sound solid ice, across which they presently marched, well lighted on their way. The Dance of the Spirits —the aurora—was throwing its flickering witchery over the floes, tinging cold ice with hues of warm copper and greenish-blue. In the southeast the slow dawn was heralded by a deep red glare; and with the passing of hours the sun slowly rose, like a spinning metal disk emerging from intolerable flame. With its rise the ice became a wonder-world ablaze with vari-colored fires, the frosty floes gleaming like sheets of gold, resplendent with a gem-work of blazing rubies, amethysts and emeralds. Before the spectacle the band fell silent.

But the glory soon passed, curtained in full glow by ever more frequent waves of mist, dark, leaden-hued, thick almost as smoke from a prairie-fire. Through this the band moved with all caution for several days until they came again to open water. Here they camped to take inventory of their resources.

Though they had three bows, an ice-ax, one harpoon and a length of line between them, all else including arrows, tomahawks and most of the meat had been thrown aside in their flight across young ice. Their little meat was soon gone; to return was impossible. The only alternative was to seek a pan of ice large enough to bear their combined weight and chance all on ferrying across the watery lead. Upon this plan, as set forth by Kioga, the band agreed unanimously.

Soon the mists rose a little, permitting them a glimpse of the sea. At what he saw, Kioga's heart gave a mighty leap.

Seals sported in the ground-swell near by. From afar came the reverberant roaring of a sea-lion herd swimming rapidly northward. A hundred yards away a whale showed its fluke, sank, leaped suddenly clear of the sea and fell back resoundingly, creating a wave that washed up on their floe. By this evidences the Snow Hawk confirmed his earlier conclusion that they were on the edge of that great warm Arctic current which, so far as is now known, surrounds the land of Nato'wa. Far across it, below the horizon he knew, were the barrier-reefs which gird that impregnable land with a labyrinth of rocky treachery.

To a modern naturalist, the very presence of sea-lions would have seemed anomalous, thus far north of their ancient harems on the Pribilof Islands. But an all-wise all-provident Creator alone may set the hour of a species' extinction. Nature decreed that the sea-lion, and his fellow-unfortunate, the almost vanished sea-otter, should forsake their age-old southward migration to find haven from Man the Destroyer, and a breeding-place in the warm currents about Nato'wa.

MORNING came after a night of rest, and they were preparing to carry out their plan to ferry across the open water, when Tokala the Fox ran into camp with startling tidings.

"We are already drifting," he panted. "The main ice is far back!"

It was true. Their floe had become detached from the solid field, barely visible in the distance southeast. Their course therefore was north and west, with which they found no fault. That night, however, their floe divided itself, like some gigantic amœba, into several lesser floes; and shortly thereafter a dangerous situation disclosed itself to the band. It was Grass Girl, the mother of Plenty Meat, who voiced it thus:

"The ice is cold. The water is warmer. Our camp is melting out from under us. Beat your medicine-drum, O my husband, that the ears of the Great Ones may know we pray to them. For if we come not soon to land, we will leave our bones in the ocean."

Moon's Son obeyed, thumping his medicine-drum all night, and in the morning its sound was still to be heard across the steel-blue waters. Kioga heard it as he surveyed the newest inroads of the sea upon their floe. About its edges spongy ice fell away at a thrust of his harpoon, and at central points the floe was badly honeycombed. They dwelt today upon a little world of ice which was disintegrating under them.

Perhaps the Great Ones above did hear; or perhaps a pack of three great killer-whales was to blame for a small herd of sea-lions taking temporary refuge on the far end of the floe. Kioga stole upon these, their barking and roaring a thrilling medley in his ears.

WITHIN throwing distance he rose. Swiftly he hurled the harpoon with deadly force, straight through the nearest bull's heart. Five cows struck the waters simultaneously and escaped. But a young bull, startled by its companion's downfall, bolted back from the bleeding animal, and by a stroke of good fortune Kioga was enabled to cut it off, pounce upon and dispatch it cleanly and quickly with a few knife-thrusts.

A shout to the band brought everyone running. The kills were dragged to camp and the skins separated from the meat. With the thick flipper-skin the women renewed the worn boot-soles of the band, sewing it on with sea-lion sinews. The heavy slabs of fat replenished their supply of fuel-oil for the lamps; and the hungry dogs fought over great chunks of meat tossed to them from the ample supply now available.

But with the ice-ax Kioga was breaking up the sledges carefully and measuring the skins with his eye.

CHAPTER VIII

NATO'WA! NATO'WA!

ALL day the Snow Hawk worked with ax and knife, cunningly joining together pieces of sledge-wood, bound with seal-skin strips and shaped into ribs for a canoe. These he affixed to a longer keel-piece and before the eyes of the Indians a kayak took form. Over the frame he drew the raw sea-lion skins, pulling them taut as a drumhead about the curved ribbing.

Meanwhile the women worked upon the intestines of the sea-lions, slitting, flattening and suppling them. Of these strips sewn together he fashioned a crude decking for the makeshift kayak. With more care a finer craft would have resulted. But haste was vital, a fact pointedly indicated by the constant breaking away of sections from their floe. Kioga knew, of course, that all could not seek safety in this little craft. If it served him in driving sea-animals within reach of the band's weapons, it would have done all he expected of it.

Having completed his work he made a brief tour of the little island of ice which was their home. Convinced that it would hang together for several days more, he then lay down for a few hours of well-earned rest, and refreshed, rose at dawn with the others, prepared for an arduous day, filled with excitement and peril.

The kayak, which he had left afloat the night before, having leaked not one drop, presented an interior dry as a chip. A paddle was made of sledge-wood. Upon the covered deck he laid the harpoon and turned to his Indians. They awaited his words at the edge of the floe, the only ice visible now on all the flat expanse of sea.

"Hear me, warriors," said the Snow Hawk. "Yonder a band of Awuk's people swim. If we had time to wait, they would soon come to lie upon our ice. But there is not time. I go, then, to invite them here. See that you make them welcome with your sharp spears. Awuk and his folk are stupid. Avoid the cows if with young. Creep slow and silent among the great bulls farthest from the water. Kill swiftly with well-aimed strokes, that many may die before the rest become alarmed. Keep the dogs hidden and away. . . . I go."

With that the Snow Hawk embarked in his kayak, moving quietly away from the floe. An hour passed. He circled far out around the little walrus-herd,

then slowly came upon them, gently thumping his hollow canoe with the flat of the paddle. The herd, cautious but not alarmed, moved away toward the floe. Thus by imperceptible degrees the strategy was wrought, the walrus moving a little, Kioga pursuing leisurely. At last that which he had anticipated transpired. One at a time or two by two the walrus flung themselves on the floe, where the Indian hunters lay in wait.

It proved to be not a hunt but rather a slaughter. Wind and sun favored the Indians. The breeze blew from the walrus and they blinked their none too keen eyes in the rising sunlight. With lances improvised from sledge-wood to which their knives were fixed, the band crept up. Ten bulls quivered in the death-struggle before the rest took warning. Then such a bellowing as seldom rives the silence of those waters echoed across to Kioga's ears. Several more of the gigantic visitors fell, lanced to the heart.

Kioga meanwhile approached with extreme slowness, having taken in tow the first evidence of land, a small tree of many branches, which he recognized as one of a variety which grows on the coasts of Nato'wa. He brought it along not only to encourage the band, but also for its tough resilient boughs, which would be sore needed in the construction of a craft large enough to bear all to safety.

Within hearing of the Indians on the ice, he was suddenly aware that their shouts contained not the jubilation of successful hunters, but frantic notes of warning. The voice of Tokala rose shrilly above the others:

"Behind you! Look back!"

A swift rearward glance revealed to Kioga the cause of their alarm—a school of four orcas, the dread killer-whales believed by Eskimo to be the reincarnation of land-wolves. A moment the Snow Hawk watched narrowly as they approached swiftly, side by side, their immense black dorsal fins erect, a sinister spectacle. Even as he watched, an immense sea-lion leaped frantically from the sea in their path but too late to avoid the closing of great jaws armed with row on row of deadly teeth.

With the pack-unity of wolves the orcas paused to do murder, while Kioga bent every energy toward reaching the floe with his clumsy tow. A hundred yards lay between him and safety when the orcas moved again through bloody foam in their relentless formation. As

"Look on me—and say if you know not my name!" said the newcomer sternly.

they approached, the analogy was plain again—water-wolves, an ocean pack bent on rapine, their back-fins slashing the water like great blunt glaives.

No man in a kayak saw they, but a long seal-like shape, basking as it were at the water's surface near the floe. In a body they sounded, and for a long minute there was a silence. Then the sea seemed to erupt killer whales ten yards from the Snow Hawk's tiny craft. Full length from the water leaped the orcas, like immensely enlarged salmon. From each rounded head a snowy plume of spray jetted hissing up. As one animal they fell upon the frail skin cockle-shell, smashing it to shreds amid a smother of foam and the lash and thrash of mighty fins and broad thick-muscled tails.

But blood was not let in that fearful assault. No fool was Kioga to pit his lesser muscles against beasts like these! On the instant of their reappearance, with their spouting loud in his ears, he abandoned the kayak, stepped upon the tree drawing abreast of him, and balancing like a wire-walker, darted its length, ankle-deep in water. As he approached its thick end, the blunt white-chinned snout of an orca jutted forth between him and the floe. Too late to pause—the tree-trunk was settling under his weight—he executed a mighty leap, full upon the slippery back of the blowing orca, and flung his line to the ice. As he alighted, half-blinded by the animal's steamy blast, he drove the harpoon deep within an inch of the palpitating spout-hole.

Simultaneously the whale thrashed the sea into milky froth. And that had assuredly been the end of Kioga, but for the presence of mind of Moon's Son the medicine-man, who took three quick turns of the line about a ridge of ice. As

the orca sounded, the weapon was torn from the wound, and Kioga, still gripping its handle, was hauled to safety.

Already the others were sinking on the blood-trace of their stricken fellow—a grim trail that ended in cannibalism a mile distant. Whereafter, well-gorged, the remaining three killer whales were seen no more.

Again under the moon's light, the sounds of ax were renewed. From the tree the Snow Hawk hewed away the excess branches, leaving only several at regular intervals on either side. Bent up from the bole, which was to be the keel, the branches were as ribs, stayed with hide ropes and bound at all points of stress by hide thong. The sharp knives had had their way with the tough walrus-skins. Men and women alike labored with bone awls and needles, drawing thread larger than the hole through it was forcibly pulled, to bind the interlocking seams together in a water-tight union. So the oomiak skin was assembled.

Slowly the craft took a form at which an Eskimo would have laughed—unless he too lived on a world that melted swiftly away beneath his feet! When it was completed many hands moved it to the water's edge, and lowered it gently.

Sea-water welled through the skin bottom. But the dismay of the Indians was short-lived. As the skins became water-soaked the seams swelled. No more brine was then admitted. But the work of construction was done none too soon. Near by another great chunk of the floe cracked away with a splash.

A short journey convinced Kioga that the craft would bear them safely across open water at least to the reefs about Nato'wa. On the morrow, men, women, dogs and children took to their rude ark, bearing meat, and water in skin bags, to last a week. Thus they left the floe behind them.

FAVORED by wind and current, within a few days they found themselves within sight of distant shoals extending to the horizon at either hand. Meanwhile they had collected another proof of land near by, a sapling. This, when trimmed and rigged with their gut tarpaulins became a tolerably effective mast and sail, giving them additional headway. . . . By dawn of the next day they coasted within sound of the waves roaring over the rocky reefs.

At the bow Kioga scanned the rocks. Many times he had come hither from the mainland, through a channel known only to himself, which he had discovered by observing the routes taken by the sharks infesting the coastal bays of Nato'wa. His eyes sought the landmark which he had last seen when he piloted the yacht *Alberta* through the inner labyrinth toward the open sea. He saw it at last, a ragged pinnacle of basalt, forming a natural breakwater, behind which he guided his unwieldy craft and its load of weary human freight.

THIS would be their last opportunity to rest before the final harrowing barrier was conquered and the real shore attained. Rest they did on the narrow reef beside a huge roaring fire of crackling driftwood, the resinous smells of which were delicious after long weeks in the reek of a smoky seal-oil flame. But impatience to reach their goal brought them early awake. With dawn even the dogs seemed eager for action. Lightening his craft by every possible ounce, Kioga stripped it to the barest essentials.

Fending-poles were made of driftwood. Then, with an eye to the swift inrush of the tide, the threading of the deadly reefs was begun in a growing mist. In a light canoe Kioga had often made the perilous passage in three days. In the stiff-handling oomiak, deep-laden and slow to respond, they were that long making half the distance; and were forced by fog to camp on another rocky reef, subsisting on clams dug from the rocks. The dismal mists rolled thicker on every side. Immense tidal combers dashed cold spray over the huddling band.

It was a small thing which sent their spirits soaring. In the midst of foreboding, with a weary flutter of mist-wet wings, a little wind-battered bird alighted upon the wet rocks. Such a show of indomitable cheer as it then made must have raised the hearts of condemned men. Its song was a subdued twitter, suddenly bursting into a series of ear-piercing whistles, repeated with swelling throat. Five times it ran its rapid score with comic fearless earnestness. When the Indians laughed, its crest drooped as if in embarrassment. Then it took flight and fluttered shoreward through the mists.

But with it went also despair. As the mists rose slightly the band again put off. Vigorously they fought the great waves which would have hurled their craft upon the rocky ridges, turning it safely a thousand times, with their fending-poles.

The thousand-and-first time disaster fell like a lightning-bolt. An invisible reef was suddenly uncovered by a wave in the trough of which the oomiak rode, to graze it with a sickening rip of the walrus-hide bottom, through which the sea-water boiled.

They could no more than let her pound against the nearest reef and abandon as swiftly as possible, one helping another to the rocky ledge whose under-water spur had scuttled their craft. It seemed they had come all this way only to meet their end within striking range of their goal. But the winds calmed; the mists dissipated. The sea came to rest. On the southern horizon the sun rose to but half the size of an immense fiery orange before slowly beginning its descent. But by its glorious slanting beams Kioga saw the receding tide had uncovered more of the ledge on which they stood—and showed it to be in reality a little rocky peninsula joined to the mainland. They could wade ashore!

Towering, forbidding, inhospitable-looking as a castle's wall, a great cliff reared into the sky beyond, its battlements gilded by the vanishing sunlight. In the calm bay below the cliffs a host of wild-fowl rose in a honking cloud as a pair of fisher-eagles swooped in upon them, striking right and left. On a little beach bordering the bay lay the wrecked oomiak, round about which sandpipers darted with stiffly mechanical rapidity, like wound-up toys, concerned only with making the most of the short daylight hours in filling their little crops.

A LONG moment the band looked upon these evidences of land-life, stunned by the reality of what they had striven toward, all these long arduous moons, and endeavoring to maintain composure. Then suddenly a choked sob escaped Grass Girl, holding her babe against her breast. Others of the women wept hysterically. The men of the red-skinned migrants, deeply emotional beneath their stoic veneers, did strange things.

Old Crow Man stood silent with outstretched arms, great tears rolling unheeded down his seamed cheeks. From rock to wet rock leaped the younger men, some to throw themselves bodily down to kiss the wet sand, others to kneel and filter its particles upon their heads and shoulders. Tokala the Fox capered shouting gleefully about the beach, his lynx-kitten still on one arm. The uncertain dogs picked their way cautiously ashore, pausing to sniff new scents or prick up their ears at new sounds; while one, nipped astern by the claw of a gigantic rock-crab, chased its tail in a spinning circle.

Kioga, however, knew too well the dangers of this wild coast, to tarry; and after their moment of thanksgiving, he led his band along the cliffs toward an ascending path.

The eager dogs, excited by fresh scents on every hand, roved in a scattered group a hundred yards in advance. The band had, in fact, barely gained the up-trail when what the Snow Hawk sought to avoid came to pass, with such suddenness that he was powerless to intervene.

HEEDLESS of several summonses to return, the yelping dogs had gathered around an old bone-pile, long since picked clean by the scavengers, and were here sniffing about. Of a sudden a score of lean gaunt shadows materialized as if from nowhere, rounding a bend in the cliff wall like silent specters; and in their wake flew and circled a noisome band of croaking ravens and lesser crows.

Of all the fierce living things in the land of Nato'wa, none is so much to be feared as these coastal felons, the Dire-wolves, who respect nothing that walks on two legs or four.

Running in such close formation that a room-sized rug would have covered the pack, at the moment of glimpsing the dogs their tactics changed. The inner segment described an encircling movement, cutting off the dogs' retreat toward the cliffs. The outer, without pause or hesitation, rushed foaming on the prey.

Now these were prime giant husky dogs in fine condition, many of them little less than wild themselves. Yet against the leather-tendoned, trap-jawed beasts which attacked, they were as suckling puppies. Came the deadly snick and slashing snap of fangs on fangs, mingling with the ferocious snarling of the cornered dogs, fighting for life itself. But from the gaunt destroyers there came no vocal sound. The Dire-wolves of Nato'wa speak but once, before assembling, and do their killing in grim silence.

One of the dogs, indeed, made good his escape from the first rush. But the leader of the second segment laid him out twitching, half his throat bitten away by a single rabid chop of the jaws. From sight, to attack, to finish, it was over as appallingly soon as that. Not one dog survived when the wolves crouched down

to their hot feast, pausing now and then only to slash at the impatient ravens hovering in black impudent clouds about their ears.

From a safe height in the cliffs, wherefrom they could hurl great rocks in case of attack, Kioga's band looked upon the scene which symbolized the gloomy savagery of this untamed land as word of mouth could never have done: the faithful companions of their long march were no more. Forewarned against the grim realities of the wilderness round about them, the Indians finally continued their climb, scaling the cliffs. Atop the ramparts they built a shelter of rocks wherein to sleep the night. And here Kioga warned his party at length as to the precautions to be taken against the prowlers of darkness.

"Take no risks," he concluded. "Keep your fire hooded. The Shoni scalp-hunters may be abroad. Wait patiently within your shelter until I return with meat. Be alert to admit me when I call from the darkness."

With that the Snow Hawk melted into the gloom as silently as a leaf grows. Over his head the sky was intensely black, shot with the great Arctic stars, glittering like silver. Kioga, grateful to be home, drank in the tonic piny air until it seemed his chest must burst.

At the edge of the evergreen forest he paused to listen.

Moving aground a little way on the animal trails, he sensed something looming up before him, and at a touch of the shaggy bark, knew it for an immense fallen tree-bole. Upon this he vaulted lightly, stealing along its slanting length.

Now he paused to probe the dark with widened pupils. Two shining mirrors flashed yellow light, went out. He knew that a puma prowled near by—and on that he remembered Mika, the great savage panther he had raised from cubhood, and hunted with by the light of the Arctic moon. He recalled Aki the bear, that shaggy bulwark of protection who had defended him from a hundred foes.

HE kept moving onward, into the wind now, and over terrain which had not known his tread for many moons. His course took him straight along the lip of a ravine, deep in which a tiger spoke in husky earth-shaking tones, and thence inland, skirting the base of a mountain. Soon he caught the scent he sought—an acrid, faintly sulphurous smell. Following this, he entered a little valley in whose shelter the forest was yet thicker. Here he came to that place frequented some time in its life by every beast in the forest for fifty miles around —the hot springs. In these curative fluids torn tissues find comfort.

SEARCHING out a certain pool, Kioga found it occupied by a huge old grizzly bear, splashing joyously about in the moonlight, bellowing with enjoyment. Sloughing off his furs, upon the aged bather Kioga waited patiently, standing like some naked god amid the spinning vapors. When the bear emerged, shaking water over a radius of many square yards, Kioga gave him time to leave, before depositing his clothing on a convenient ledge. Then he enjoyed that which he craved more than red meat itself—a hot cleansing bath, his first in many weeks. In this forest luxury he reveled for half an hour, emerging refreshed and with skin aglow, to plunge himself in cold running water near by. Then he returned to his clothes.

As he bent above them, a few branches overhead moved, and a beam of moonlight revealed an intruder.

Coal-black of body, but with mottled whitish triangles running down its six feet of muscular back, a rock-viper lay coiled in the dry warmth of his cast-off furs. Its peculiar taint rose to his nostrils like the very emanation of death.

Frozen to rigidity, with hand still outstretched, the wits of the Snow Hawk sped like lightning. To move would but draw its strike, and he would end with the deadly thing fastened to his flesh.

There was nothing to do but wait—and hope it would mistake him for a part of the scenery. As he waited, in the expectation of death, there flitted past his ear a pygmy owl, uttering its curious *kr-r-r, kr-r-r, kr-r-r.*

Like a flash of light the snake lashed out at the little blur of feathers. Quick as the strike came, the winged elf evaded it, and perched indignantly on a ledge near by. And in that fraction of a second Kioga's fingers snapped upon the snake's clammy neck just below the head. The koang whipped itself round his arm, no mean antagonist even now, with its twenty pounds struggling to get those fangs home. But fingers with the grip of blacksmith's pincers held it securely. Then with his knife he severed the head from the thrashing body. He cleansed the knife and buried the head under a foot of earth. The remainder

Kioga took up a position behind and to one side of the assemblage. Now and then a passing warrior greeted him—sometimes with hostile bearing; but none questioned his identity as Raven's Tail.

he left to the pygmy owl whose coming had probably saved his life.

Then Kioga forgot his close brush with extinction, as all wild things forget what is over and done with, and bethought him of his Indians, who would be waiting for food. Naked as he had emerged from the sulphur-bath, he prowled forth into the dark again.

It was winter in Nato'wa indeed. But the heat in this timbered valley, warmed winter and summer by the hot springs bubbling in it, soon brought the sweat springing through Kioga's pores.

IN every direction the breeze bore the scent of meat. And so, on a rock ledge affording a moonlight view of an animal trail, Kioga crouched in ambush with knife between teeth, awaiting the coming of game.

Soon came one of noble mien and careful step, its ten-point antlers edged with droplets of condensing mist. A study in sepia and quicksilver, all unsuspecting the elk moved under the hunter's perch. One step it came, and two; another, and then—down pounced that lurking shadow.

An instant of plunging blade to hilt in the creature's side, another seizing the horn, with lightning twist dislocating the spine—thus, without sound died Kioga's prey, struck down by a master killer.

Leaving the viscera for the scavengers, Kioga bore his kill back to the springs, donned his furs, and turned back toward the rocky shelter which housed his band, just as the sun rimmed redly over the southern horizon.

Suddenly there came to him upon the now frosty breeze a sound—the ground-vibrating temblors of a tiger's roar. To you or me, one roar would seem like another. To Kioga's ear, long familiar with the forest's many voices, this much was certain: Guna had encountered prey. And in all the forest few willingly miss witnessing the red drama of a tiger's killing—Kioga least of all. He turned aside, approaching the stream, along which doubtless Guna prowled.

To the Snow Hawk that deep-chested challenge brought no slightest quiver. But at a further sound—somewhat like a kitten's mewing—he started, almost as if with fear, and threw aside his new-killed buck.

To another, hurrying along the stream's bank, sheer terror came. It was Tokala the Fox, armed with a great unwieldy club that was more a burden than an arm in his small hand, who paused quivering as the tiger spoke. Hours since, he had slipped away from the Indian camp, seeking only the highest felicity life held for him—to be at the Snow Hawk's side. Lighted until now by the aurora, unscathed save by the devil's-club which had lacerated him when he sought protection from preying beasts behind its sharp bayonets, still in one arm he bore his cherished pet the lynx-kitten; and it was the voice of this little creature that had caught the tiger's ear—and Kioga's.

And now Tokala's eyes fastened in dread fascination on the movement in the undergrowth whence rolled that terrifying sound.

From a thicket there slowly emerged into the light, stripe by stripe, a beast of splendid majesty. A massive orange-colored head adorned with black cross-bars came slowly into view. A pair of black-tipped thick-furred ears surmounted it. Eyes with the glow and heat of yellow fire seen through glacial ice fixed the boy, lighted with baleful menace.

Now Guna rose grunting to a half-crouch, a magnificent beast of the long-haired breed in full winter coat, richly girt by sable stripes about the glistening rufous sides. The furry cylinder of its tail was motionless save at its twitching end as the animal quivered before launching its bounding rush. The quill-like whiskers angled backward from the wrinkled lips, whose upward twitch exposed the deadly knives, those four long curving yellow seizing-teeth.

In that tense moment the Snow Hawk attained the river's bank above and behind Tokala, with ready arrow and bow half-drawn. In one glance he foresaw the frightful destruction to which Tokala stood exposed. Tokala bravely raised his club, as with short grunting roars the tiger launched its rushing charge.

Simultaneously the Snow Hawk drew in advance of the beast and loosed two lightning shafts in quick succession. One arrow took Guna squarely in the eye. The other but pierced a hinder leg. Bellowing in pain, the tiger sped on. A short twenty paces lay before its prey. The animal was closing in a mighty spring.

Then from its blinded side came catapulting one whose lightning onslaught was as ferocious as the tiger's own. Tokala and the fading stars looked upon a scene plucked from some prehistoric page in man's forgotten past. Man and beast collided obliquely with a force that all but tore the Snow Hawk's arms from

their sockets. Gripping the tiger's ruff with one hand, with the other he stabbed his keen blade repeatedly into the muscled neck, severing the great artery.

The roaring tiger reared, shaking itself like some great dog within its loose thick overcoat of fur, great jets of blood spraying the river sands. But powerful legs linked him round the loins like iron chain. All deliberately, yet with the practised quickness of many a like encounter, Kioga planted his steel in other vulnerable ground—working it deep behind the ears, where skull meets neck.

A roar ear-splitting in its volume foretold the end. Grimly Kioga made good his hold, not daring now to drop away, lest in its paroxysms, already begun, the tiger rend him apart.

Two shuddering leaps the tiger took, then crashed down dead upon its back, bearing the Snow Hawk also down, to strike with stunning force against the hard-packed sand. Then all was dark, and Kioga knew no more.

During all the crowded moments of the encounter Tokala had watched in terror mixed with amazement, half disbelieving that of which his own eyes now assured him—that even Kioga had triumphed over so fierce a beast as this. Feverishly he clubbed the tiger on the skull.

But now he saw the Snow Hawk pinned, bleeding and silent, under the huge striped body. Twice he whispered the Snow Hawk's name and went unanswered. With all his strength, dragging at one mighty forepaw, Tokala sought vainly to move the giant carcass. Then hastily he fled as he had come, along the stream bank, back to the Indian rock-camp, to bring Kioga aid.

ROUSING a few minutes later, Kioga threw off the tiger's pinioning weight. Looking about for Tokala, he saw only footprints in the sand and surmised the boy had gone for help. Perhaps it would be needed, for as he bent to pick up the deer he had earlier thrown aside, a stab of pain ran through his thigh. Nevertheless he shouldered the needed meat and limped on Tokala's trail. What with frequent rests to massage his injured leg back to normal, and pauses to make sure that Tokala's tracks had not strayed, he was more than an hour reaching the cliffs.

He would eat with the band, thought Kioga, and then reconnoiter near Hopeka —the Indian village where once he had ruled supreme as war-chieftain of all the Shoni tribes. He wished to learn their exact sentiment toward himself. For because of his rescue, more than a year ago, of white captives from the storm-driven yacht *Alberta,* whom the Indians had been tormenting at the torture-stake, Kioga had incurred the wrath of his people.

At Hopeka he expected only hostility. But whatever he found, he could perhaps enter the village and appropriate weapons with which to arm his own band. Failing that, there was still his cave, several marches distant, where were hidden weapons enough for fifty men, all hammered out long ago, on his own hidden forge. . . .

Approaching the shelter on the cliffs, he noted that the Indians had evidently taken his instructions to heart, for they neither exposed themselves, nor was a fire visible. As agreed, he called out:

"*Ai-yah!* Meat, brothers. Come with sharp knives!"

There was no answer. Laughing at their caution, Kioga added:

"Perhaps you are not hungry. Perhaps—" But he said no more; for at that moment he suspected what made him drop his burden of game and rush to the rock shelter. There was no sound within, but as he crossed the threshold, his foot came in contact with something soft—a human body, which he drew toward where the dawn light might shine on its face.

What he saw need not be dwelt upon. He was looking into the face of Moon's Son, who would beat his magic drum no more. He had been at least an hour dead, to judge from the body temperature, which the Snow Hawk noted subconsciously as one to whom death was no uncommon sight. From the terrible ragged design left by the blade, he judged it had been a bone knife wielded by a Shoni braid-collector. And Moon's Son had been scalped.

A swift glance about in the increasing light indicated a surprise and a short struggle. The trail further said that the attackers had hurried their captives off in a northerly direction. Even now the victorious warriors would be embarking in their canoes and regaling the luckless captives with picturesquely pantomimed accounts of the tortures they would surely undergo.

Two courses were open to the Snow Hawk. He could trail the Shoni braves while the spoor was hot—or anticipate their arrival at Hopeka, the village near-

est this point on the coast and capital of the Seven Tribes, and there try to free his friends. He forgot the pain of his injured leg, as circling northward he took the paths that would bring him to a river debouching into the Hiwasi, which flowed past the gates of Hopeka.

Arrived at a likely spot, well screened by overhanging tree-limbs, he lay in wait, this time for nobler prey than deer.

CHAPTER IX

The Sorcerer

FROM time to time canoes passed the Snow Hawk's waiting-place, lighted by pine-knot torches smoking at their bows. But half-visible in the lowered dusk, Kioga recognized them by their lines. Some were deep-laden with trade-goods or tribute exacted by the Shoni from the tribes near the mountain passes and defiles miles in the interior. Such things might be bartered at the native bazaars in return for skins, weapons, feather-work, or for the skillfully made fur clothing for which the women of Hopeka are famed.

Other craft held couriers bearing messages from outlying villages, or visitors traveling from one place to another. Well favored are the Shoni in the possession of their skein of waterways, which are at once their highways of conquest and avenues of trade.

None of these did Kioga molest, until there came one craft at which his watching eyes lighted up. A small craft, it was manned by a strange figure decked in all the garish trappings of a witch-doctor. He wore an eye-mask, designed to frighten the beholder, an all-enfolding robe of deer-hides falling almost to the ankles and marked with mystic medicine-signs, and a headdress of raven tail-plumes tasseled with strands of human hair. Of the shaman's features, hidden by mask and paint, little was discernible as he paddled, muttering incantations, into the Snow Hawk's hearing.

What happened then was hidden by branches overhanging the river. The incantations ceased as if choked suddenly off; several large ripples spread out to midstream; and the canoe did not at once reappear. Perhaps the medicine-man communed with some dark spirit imparting strange secrets.

But soon the craft came forth, and in it there still sat a figure in robe and feathers and mask, as if nothing uncommon had happened. Indeed, the paddler seemed possessed of fresh strength, for the craft all but flew onward now, and came soon into view of Hopeka.

Beached before its gates lay hundreds of canoes, among which the eyes of the lone paddler roved swiftly as if in search of some one known to him. Then he pushed boldly ashore, felt the sand hiss under the prow and stepped forth, carrying a war-club which had lain beneath a thwart.

He observed that the sentries were inattentive to duty, for he approached unchallenged. Something important must be transpiring within the walls! With the war-club he rapped on the gates.

"Who knocks?" came a startled query from within.

"Look on me," answered the newcomer loud and sternly, "and say if you know not my name!"

There was a subdued colloquy between two startled guards before one climbed to gaze down from atop the lofty palisade and cry out to his fellow-sentry: "It is Raven's Tail the sorcerer! Open the gates!"

THE huge log barriers fell apart, but just wide enough to admit him they called Raven's Tail, who strode haughtily in, masked, with head carried high and robe close-wrapped about him. The gate was hurriedly pushed shut.

"Wherefore such caution, sentinel?" asked the supposed shaman, of the sentry standing respectfully by.

"A Wa-Kanek band was seen in the north by all report, O Dealer-in-Magic."

"Better, then, to be more vigilant," was the sharp answer; then: "Where were your eyes when I stole upon the gates?"

"You have been absent long, O Raven's Tail. As I hope to die a warrior, I knew you not," came the sentry's answer lamely.

"And in my long absence has naught of importance happened?"

"Does not a shaman know all that may occur?" asked the second sentry with the faintest trace of sarcasm. This brought the gaze of Kioga sharp upon his face: whereat he paled a little. And the other sentry answered:

"The Winter Festival will soon begin. The trading opens thereafter. There is talk of choosing a new warrior-chief."

"Ah! Then Kioga—" began the supposed shaman, and paused, for the sentry had stiffened, as did his companion.

To the Snow Hawk there was no surprise in this. He well knew that the men who did the fighting had small regard for the shamans who fomented war—though superstitious fear, carefully contrived by the medicine-men, usually kept open expressions of hostility quiet.

Perceiving that the sentries were watching him suspiciously, he was about to move on, when Brave Elk answered his earlier question with one of his own, cunningly designed to trip him.

"Knew you not, O shaman, that Kioga the Snow Hawk is gone away in disgrace these many long months?"

"I know everything that has happened, or will happen," returned the masked one sharply, as if in rebuke.

"Then," demanded the irrepressible Brave Elk, as was his right according to Shoni custom, "give us some sign of your great medicine."

The masquerader turned slowly, riveting the speaker with a steady stare, through the slits in the mask. Then he spoke gutturally and with emphasis designed to awe the man and others who had gathered to hear the oracle speak:

"Naught of importance has happened lately, so you have said. But I tell you that before the moon has risen, the torture-fires will be kindled. The cries of your victims will wake the forest. And beware—I repeat, beware—lest the Snow Hawk fly into your midst—for of such a thing my omens have spoken! *Hai-ya!*"

With that he wheeled and mingled with a band of tall and dignified warriors stalking about the village muffled in beautiful skin blankets and crowned with fillets of handsome feathers indicative of their deeds and office. Everywhere he went, a way was cleared for him.

SOON the jaws of the sentries dropped, for it came to pass as Raven's Tail had foretold. A hail from the river was heard. Sentries manned the walls to scan the waters whence it came. Then fierce and shrill above the mounting noises in the village came the bloodthirsty cry: *"Ai! N'taga tui choka!"*

Prisoners for the stake! Sacrifice for the sacred fire!

All other pursuits were put aside. The populace crowded eagerly toward the gate to view those destined as sport for the licking flames. Foremost among the villagers was a figure in robe, mask and blanket.

The great gates swung apart. Flanked by their burly captors, the Indians of Kioga's band came wearily in, blood-stained and disheveled. All who lived were there. Grass Girl with her babe mourned Moon's Son, whose scalp adorned the belt of a Shoni at her side. The others glanced hopelessly about, stunned by the size of the village and the fierce expressions of its inhabitants. Little Tokala shrank back fearfully from the masked face grinning down on him as he was pushed along.

BUT the frightful creature followed, as Tokala learned by frequently looking back over a shoulder—followed and noted where the captives were imprisoned and the position of their guards; he observed that they were given food and drink, and that would-be molesters were driven off. But at last, to Tokala's intense relief, the shaman went away.

Having heard a mutter of drums on the ceremonial grounds, Kioga knew that the prisoners would be safe, at least until the Winter Festival was over, a matter of many hours, in which time much could happen. And so he proceeded toward where the drums had begun to roll, and took up a position behind and to one side of the great assemblage. Now and then a passing warrior greeted him—sometimes with hostile bearing; but none questioned his identity.

Swiftly the keen eye of the Snow Hawk darted among them all seeking a glimpse of noble Kias, friend of his boyhood—tall, lean powerful Kias, who had fought at his side in the battle at the Painted Cliffs, where under the Snow-Hawk's leadership the Shoni tribes had turned back the raiding Wa-Kanek for the first time in the memory of living men. Nowhere could Kioga distinguish that familiar figure.

But among the chiefs regnant sat Menewa, beloved of his people in the Tugari tribe, whom Kioga recognized instantly. Then his eager glance cast about for a glimpse of one he would never forget—Heladi, daughter of Menewa, she who had brought his fierce wild life its one interval of peace and calm—and a love which he had denied with unwitting callousness. Heladi was nowhere to be seen. Had she met the sudden death of the raider's knife, or fallen into the clutches of a tiger when bearing water into the village?

With ever-increasing power, this fascinating story of the Snow Hawk and the far wild land of Nato'wa continues in our forthcoming June issue.

No Flame More Fierce

It was no popgun South American revolution these tourists from the States walked into but an ugly business of blood and fire. . . . A powerful story by the author of "The Pirate's Beard" and "The Rebellion of Small Fry."

CAPTAIN VAN OOT came down late to dinner. His face was serious, a noticeable and unusual thing for that rather jolly personage. He stood at his place for a moment and then said in a voice loud enough to break through the conversation of the ten passengers:

"Well, we'll make San Lucas early tomorrow morning."

Mr. Denham's voice answered for all the others:

"Okay, Captain. . . . What time do we get through with the port authorities?"

"Probably about nine-thirty or so. But there is something I want to say to you: I have a radiogram fro ı the company office at San Lucas saying there is a revolution in Colivuela. It may affect your plans."

"Hell, no," said Mr. Denham. "There's always a popgun revolution in these little spig countries. That won't bother us, will it, folks? After all, we're American citizens."

There was a general buzz of approval on the part of the other passengers. The two professors, both a little the worse—or better—for good mellow Dutch gin, lifted their wine-glasses.

"Here's to the revolution!" toasted Professor Hastings.

"Bigger and better revolutions!" toasted Professor Mayhew.

And all the others, even quiet, dumpy Mrs. Chaler and pretty, doll-like little Miss Brewster, responded to the toasts. Even the German couple who scarcely knew what it was about raised their glasses, and so did Maxie Stein, who didn't care about revolutions as long as he could get to Curaçao and buy up those perfumes at bargain prices. They were a gay crowd. The *Zaraza* was a passenger-carrying freighter of the Royal Dutch Line, and in the memory of no officer had there ever been such a joyous crowd.

But there was one passenger who didn't drink to that toast. He didn't drink at all. He never ordered wine, never accepted any of the gins that the Denhams and the gay professors kept offering everybody. His name was Knowles, and that was about all anyone knew of him. He was tall and thin and white and tired-looking. He wore brown sun-glasses to shield his eyes. You could see pretty plainly that he wasn't a good mixer. He spent most of his time alone, quietly reading heavy-looking books. And when Captain Van Oot announced the revolution, it was pretty plain that Mr. Knowles was worried about it. Sitting next to the Captain, he was seen by the others to ask serious questions in a low tone.

Mr. Denham nudged Maxie Stein and pointed this out to him with a wink. Everybody at the Denhams' table looked and grinned and nodded to each other. There are always people like that—just natural-born sissies, timorous little people who are afraid of everything. Probably Mr. Knowles was a bookkeeper or a little clerk. You could practically tell, by his dark glasses. Probably this cruise was the greatest adventure of his retreating and uneventful life.

And when dinner was over and the passengers had piled up on the deck to have their coffee and rum, Mr. Knowles stayed below, still conversing seriously with the Captain and the First Officer.

Said Mr. Denham to Mrs. Denham, loud enough for all the rest to hear and get a laugh out of it:

"Well, the revolution seems to panic our friend Mr. Milktoast, doesn't it? It's a wonder that bird ever dares to cross the Hudson on a ferry-boat."

They all thought that crack was pretty funny.

THE *Zaraza* made the harbor at San Lucas just before sunrise. She was warped into the dock toward seven o'clock. Over the flat top of the dock-sheds, Mr. Knowles could see the town

By FULTON GRANT

Illustrated by Austin Briggs

rising up in terraces of streets, crawling up the side of the mountains as though the city feared the very cleanliness of the sea. He had risen with the sun and had stationed himself on the freight deck, forward in the very prow of the ship. Strange sounds, catcalls, shoutings, screaming of windlasses, puffing of donkey engines broke into his thinking. Crowds of scantily clad little brown people were milling about the pier and swarming over the railroad sidings. Officials clambered aboard. They had much brass on their soiled white uniforms. Their skin was dirty brown, sometimes a chalky gray. They sat in the dining-salon and talked rapidly with the Captain in guttural Spanish. Mr. Knowles listened to them through the doorway. As he listened, he grew even paler than usual.

AT breakfast blue identity-cards were issued to all passengers.

"We want to get a car and drive up to the capital to watch the fun," announced Mr. Denham, again spokesman for the others. "I suppose the Company can arrange that for us."

Captain Van Oot frowned.

"I doubt if they'll let you go through," he said. "There may be serious trouble, you know."

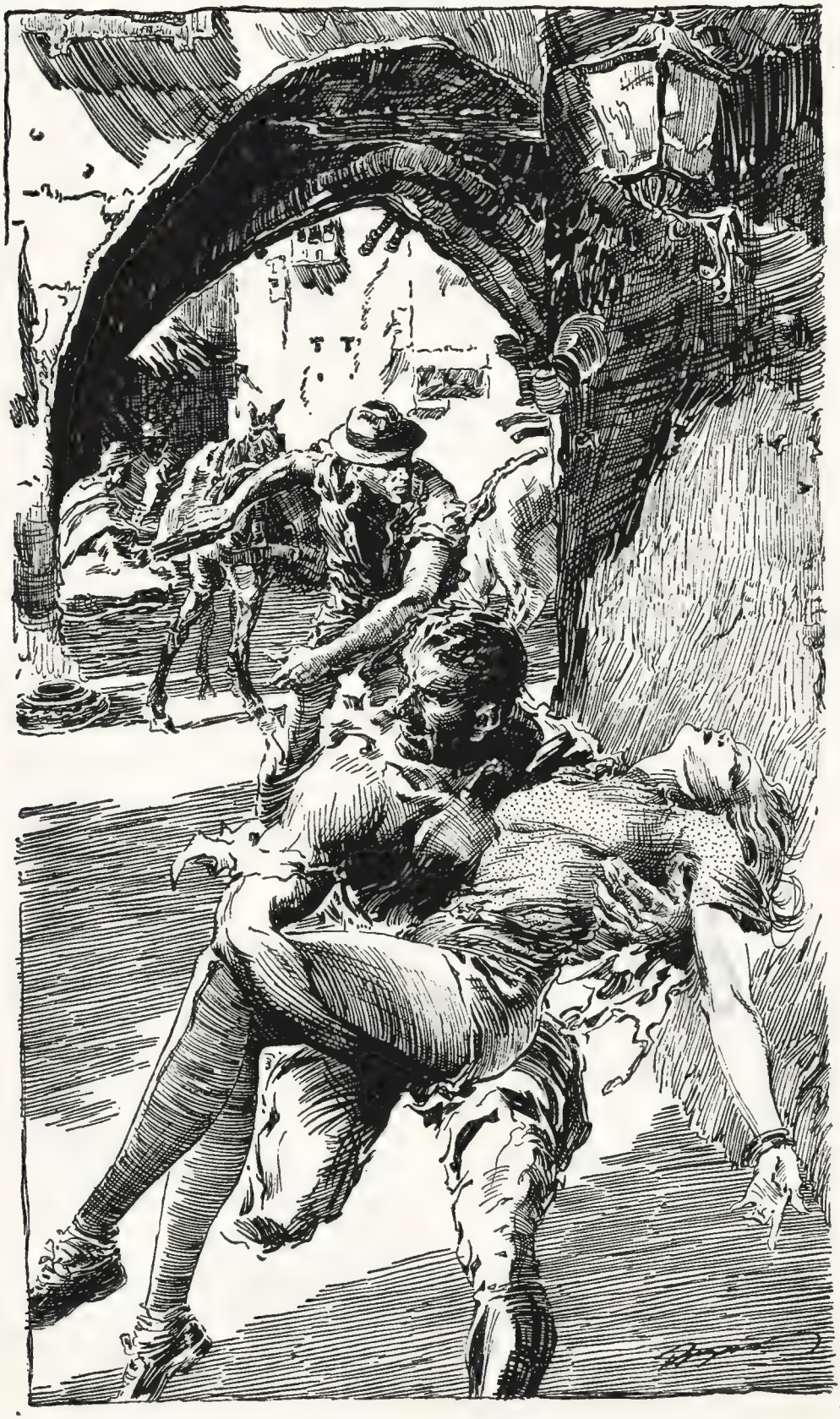
"Oh, we don't care," said Mrs. Denham. "After all, we *are* American citizens. They wouldn't *dare* to touch us. Tell your office here we want a seven-passenger car. It will be all right."

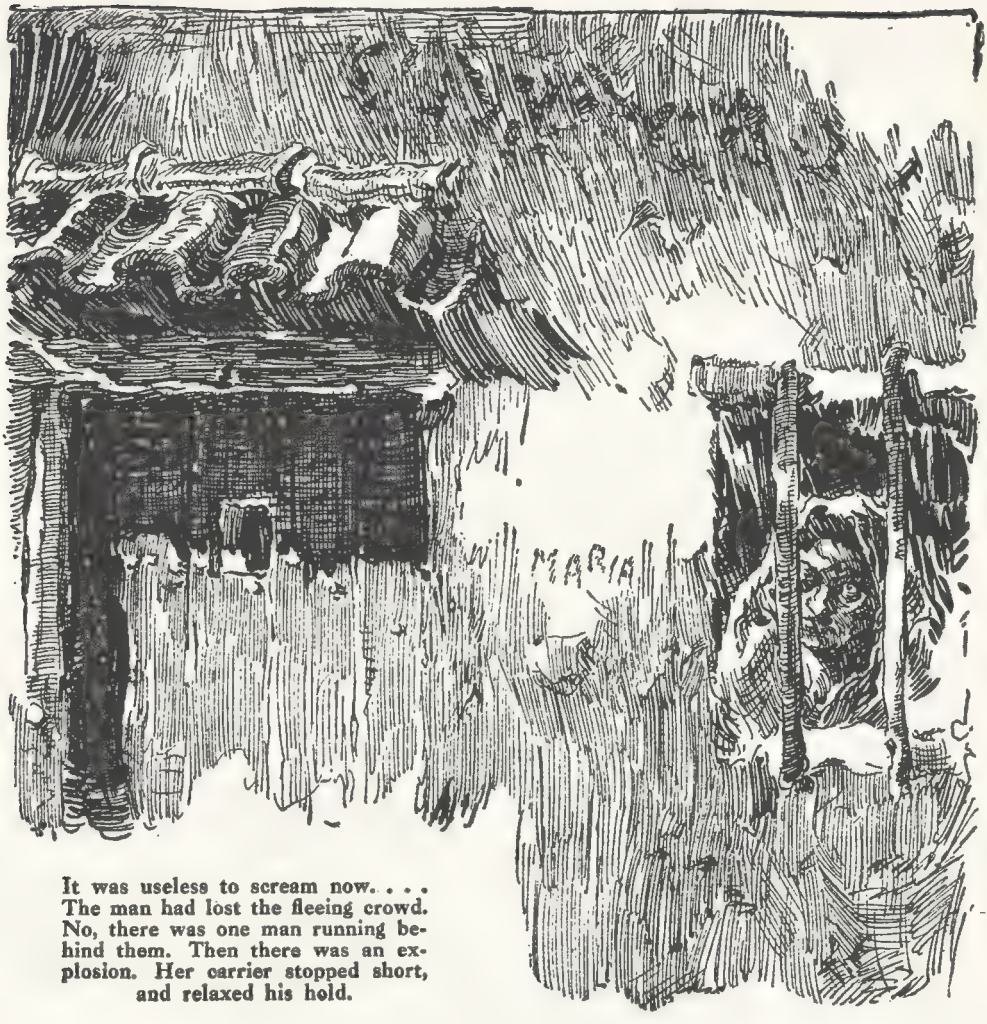
The Captain merely smiled and said: "Very well, Madam; I'm sure they'll try to arrange it."

As everyone expected, Mr. Knowles did not go ashore with the others. Irrepressible Maxie Stein called out to him as they went down the gangplank:

"Hey, Knowles, don't be a sissy all your life. C'mon and see the fireworks. Little Esther, here, needs a boy friend to protect her."

"I must say, I don't like this crowd," said Professor Hastings.





It was useless to scream now. . . . The man had lost the fleeing crowd. No, there was one man running behind them. Then there was an explosion. Her carrier stopped short, and relaxed his hold.

"Little Esther" was Miss Esther Brewster, and everybody thought that Maxie's wisecrack was funny, especially because Mr. Knowles had attempted to talk with her one evening about the difference between the stars you can see in the Southern sky and those in the Northern sky, and Miss Brewster had been bored and excused herself. This morning Miss Brewster was quite sparkling. She had turquoise shorts on, and a bright carmine blouse. She made a vivid spot of color going down the gangplank, and all the natives standing around grinned and leered.

Mr. Knowles called out to her, ignoring Maxie:

"I wouldn't wear that costume here if I were you, Miss Brewster."

"No, I guess you wouldn't," she replied laughingly, and that was pretty funny too.

When the other passengers had vanished down the crooked streets of San Lucas, Mr. Knowles went back to his cabin. He fumbled in his bag and pulled out a dirty, wrinkled suit of white duck and an old, battered, rolled-up Panama. These he put on, apparently not caring how seedy and un-American he looked. Then he fumbled again in his bag and brought out a curious little camera. It was a German gadget that looked like a small, clumsy pistol, but it had a 1.5 lens, and a battery of twenty tiny plates three centimeters square. Again from the bag he pulled a short automatic and shoved it into his hip pocket. Imagine a sissy with a gun like that! Mr. Denham and Maxie Stein would have got a big laugh out of that. And when Mr. Knowles stepped out of his cabin, it was noticeable that he had neglected to put on shoes and socks; and in his bare feet and dirty clothes, with a cigarette dangling from his mouth, he looked more like a bedraggled native of San Lucas, or a forgotten white man

who had gone wrong and was "on the beach," as they say.

He grinned at the Captain and made his way to the radio cabin. There he had quite a conversation with Sparks, the operator, who was a bright young Dutchman and who seemed to be a little excited. Then Mr. Knowles clambered to the freight deck, pattered down the gangplank, waved at the Captain, who was standing there, and vanished in the press of endless crowds of brown people.

"Think he'll get back?" asked the First Officer of the Captain.

"God knows! I hope so," replied the Captain. "I have no authority to stop him, but I wish he had taken another ship."

"H-m-m-m," said the First Officer. "Well, this ruins his vacation. . . ."

Meanwhile the little parade of tourists had reached the offices of the Royal Dutch Line. Miss Brewster had found it more comfortable to walk between the two professors. She had found that the dirty little brown people had noticed her bright costume, so unusual in that country, and especially had they noticed her undeniably attractive legs. She didn't like the faces of these people. They were leering, drawn, unwholesome-looking people. As she passed one knot of them, a leering black man whose trousers, if they could be called such, were scarcely sufficient to cover him with modesty, made a gesture in her direction. She didn't exactly understand the gesture nor his loud remark in some strange guttural language, but she knew it wasn't very nice. The whole crowd around him laughed loudly and nastily. . . .

THE officials of the Company were courteous. But a car to take them to the capital—ah, that would be difficult. The road was dangerous; there was fighting. Yes, people had been killed. The government was doing its best, of course, but the people were out of hand. Yes, they would telephone to the State Department. Yes, they would phone the American Consul-General. Yes indeed, they would do everything in their power. But it was very doubtful if they could arrange a safe-conduct. Nothing to do but wait, unfortunately.

Said Mr. Denham:

"Why, this is absurd. We are *all* American citizens. We have the protection of the United States. They wouldn't *dare* to touch us. Where would Colivuela be without the United States? Look what our development companies have done for them. Why, we have given them their very bread—"

The Dutch official looked queerly at Mr. Denham. Had he been familiar with American slang, he might have used the expression, "Oh, yeah?" but he contented himself with a possibly more subtle observation.

"I think, Mr. Denham, that the less you say about American companies just now, the better everything will be."

"Why, the very idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Denham.

"Especially in this office—if you don't mind? As I have said, we will do all in our power to get you through to the capital, but it must be understood that we assume no responsibility at all. You go there at your own risk."

"Okay, mister," agreed Maxie Stein arrogantly. "Just get us the car; that's all we want."

SO they waited, bored, uncomfortable, hot—and thirsty. The two professors, especially, had a thirst. They slipped quietly toward the office door. Miss Brewster, who was a little bored with the others, joined them suddenly. The three pushed their way through hundreds of dirty, half-clad natives who gave way before them grudgingly. The street was very narrow. The houses were blue or red or green or pastel shades, and seemed to be leaning on each other's shoulders to keep from sliding down the hillside into the ocean. At every intersection there seemed to be more people swarming into the street.

They could, however, see a large—if rather battered and dirty—sign at the bottom of the hill which read, *"El Turaquil"* and then carried the bold English inscription, *"Cold Beer."* That was their destination.

"I must say, I don't like this crowd," said Professor Hastings.

"Nor I," agreed Professor Mayhew. "Filthy little people, aren't they?" He had not lowered his voice when he said this, and it became evident that one of the "filthy little people" had understood his uncomplimentary remark, for a lean brown hand reached out and pushed him rudely.

"Peeg! Peeg of Americano! Why you come here eef you no like thees place?" And the ratty-faced little man stuck his thumb behind his teeth and pulled it out at the Professor in a most insulting gesture. Then he cried out

something in some Indian dialect, and the entire crowd broke into catcalls and loud, unpleasant noises, evidently directed at the three Americans.

It was not comfortable. They were jostled and pushed. Hands were laid on Miss Brewster, who could only shrug them off and cling closely to Professor Mayhew. Professor Hastings, who was a large man and had been powerful in his day, bristled and would have used violence, but Mayhew hastily warned him off.

"Easy, George," he said. "Don't do anything. We're almost at the café now. Keep close to Miss Brewster here and hold yourself in. You might start something you couldn't finish."

Good, sound advice.

AT the foot of the hill the street widened into a broad plaza. The café El Turaquil faced this plaza. There were hundreds, perhaps thousands of natives milling about in this plaza, shouting frenetically. The three tourists hurried across to the café and pushed through the screen doors. The voices of those who had been screaming at them were drowned in the hubbub of the thronging plaza; nor did their persecutors follow them inside. The excitement of the mob appeared to have been too much for them.

"Allo, pliz," said a fat, greasy woman from across the bar. "You weesh one goddam good rum Brugal, yes? One dol-*lar* so cheap for you, yes."

"No, madam," insisted Professor Hastings. "We want beer. Cold beer."

"Beer? Yes, she ees cold. For one dol-*lar* so cheap."

"Too much money. We don't want to buy your bar. We only want a drink." Professor Mayhew had said this, and he had said it bluntly, flatly, and with the frown of dignity. He was not going to be fleeced by these people.

"I say one dol-*lar*. You no like, you go away," said the patrona. Then she turned to a small group of men who were drinking at the bar and addressed them in spluttering Spanish. Almost as one, they turned and looked at the three Americans. Almost as one, they spoke in voluminous Spanish with proper gesticulations. What they said was not understood, but it was obvious that they considered the fat lady was justified in demanding one "dol-*lar*" for the beer, and that a refusal was an insult, possibly to the whole nation.

"Come on, let's go," said Professor Mayhew.

"Oh, yes, let's," said Miss Brewster, and the three turned toward the door.

Hardly had they reached the door-sill when bedlam broke out behind them. The fat patrona, the clients—everyone in the El Turaquil bar—began screaming. The cries were taken up outside. Groups broke away from the mob in the plaza and turned their attention to the three Americans, waving their arms, making obscene gestures. They began crowding close. They began reaching with their hands. They began jostling and pushing and pawing the two professors and the frightened Miss Brewster. And then George Hastings, Professor of Middle English at Midwestern, lost his temper. Just as a scrawny little brown man, his face working and twitching with inexplicable rage, reached out to clutch the thin silk of Miss Brewster's blouse, Professor Hastings drove a strong left into the native's face. He whirled and smacked another with his right. He roared like a bull, unmindful of the dignity of his Ph.D. degree:

"Come on, you damned niggers! Come on, you black scum!" And other more violent expletives which he had not used these fifteen or twenty years.

There was a pause. Hastings, though not young, was a big man, and looked dangerous. But the native who had fallen under the Professor's left was writhing into a crawling position, a long knife in his hand. Miss Brewster saw it, and screamed.

Professor Mayhew kicked violently at the fist that held the knife, and the blade clattered. Other knives flashed. Miss Brewster was sure that their last minute had come. Hastings had torn off his coat and was roaring at them, gone berserk with righteous anger.

Then, suddenly, it happened.

FROM across the plaza there sounded a sharp spluttering. There were terrified and agonized screams. The spluttering was transformed into a long-drawn, sardonic chattering. Machine-guns! Glass broke behind the scared little group of tourists. There were screams inside the café.

"On the ground!" cried Mayhew, and threw himself flat. The others followed suit.

Chatter—chatter—chatter. The mob howled and broke in terror. The door of the café slammed. And in just a few

seconds the plaza was emptying in terrible confusion.

When the two professors were able to clear their minds and to concentrate, they found themselves surrounded by little men in khaki uniforms. One of these, apparently an officer, was speaking rapidly in Spanish. Hastings stood erect, very dirty and dusty. He pointed to Mayhew, who was just getting to his feet and said:

"Americanos. We Americanos."

But even as he said this, it came to him that his party was no longer complete.

"My God, Charley," he cried. "Where's the girl?"

"She's gone!" echoed Charles Mayhew, Ph.D.

Then the officer, in broken English, was apologizing, was explaining, was taking them by the arm and leading them away. Useless to try and explain about Miss Brewster. He understood nothing. Firmly, if gently, they were led from the square. A small detachment of troops was thrown around them, and still resisting, still protesting, still trying to remember the Spanish word for "woman," still bewildered at Miss Brewster's disappearance, they were led back across the railroad tracks to the docks, and escorted to the very gangplank of the *Zaraza,* whether they liked it or not.

At the gangplank was a port officer who did understand English. Both at once, they told about Miss Brewster. The officer seemed only slightly disturbed.

"Very unfortunate," he said. "But there is no cause to worry. Within one hour there will be no revolutionaries alive in San Lucas. Miss Brewster will come to no harm, you may be sure." This fact he believed. And he instructed the men to look for the young lady.

DURING the shooting, on the ground with faces buried in their arms, the professors had not seen a pair of brown hands snatch Miss Brewster up. The cries of the multitude had drowned her scream for help. They had not seen her, in the arms of a tall fellow, being carried quickly up the threadlike street that runs up toward the mountains, actually winding its way to a market-place just outside the town.

Miss Brewster's scream was paralyzed by her sudden panic. She felt the great strength of her captor, the power of his legs as he ran with her. She could not see his face, but she could see his feet as her head dangled over his shoulder. She had noticed that he wore shoes; and that, she observed, was unusual in San Lucas. It was useless to struggle, useless to scream now. The man was clutching her legs and straining as he ran. He ducked into a narrow alley, crossed a tiny courtyard and down into another narrow street. Miss Brewster noted vaguely that he had lost the fleeing crowd. No, there was one man running behind them —a tall, lean fellow in a dirty Panama and dusty bare feet. She could still hear the chatter of machine-guns.

THEN, right behind her, was an explosion. Her carrier stopped short. He relaxed his hold, and she slipped to the ground.

Running steps pattered. A voice snapped in crackling Spanish. Her captor, clutching his shoulder, stood paralyzed, murmuring: *"Santa Madre de Dios—"*

She sat there, bewildered. She saw a tall, lean man in filthy whites, running, and flourishing an automatic. His face was rather haggard, but his eyes twinkled.

"Okay, sister," he said in clear English. "Sit tight while I frisk this bird."

Miss Brewster scarcely heard him. She saw bare feet covered with dust. His thin, white lean face was besmudged and streaked with dirt. She heard the same crisp voice again in Spanish, more quietly this time, a little ironically,

"Hagame el favor de tener llevados los manos, señor!" And the native's hands reached for the sky above him.

This curious fellow grinned at Miss Brewster. Then, covering him with his automatic, he walked over to the brown native and felt his jacket. He removed a revolver from one pocket and a long knife from his belt.

"Una costumbre americana, señor," he said quietly. "An old American custom."

Then he jerked his thumb in the direction of the back street with obvious significance. The man hesitated, then slouched away, finally breaking into a run.

"What the hell did you wear that damned-fool costume for, sister? Where in hell do you think you are—Palm Beach?"

Miss Brewster thought his voice was strangely American, strangely familiar. She replied, a little weakly:

"I guess I was stupid—"

Amid howled imprecations the dignified, elderly Cavaldos was spat upon, dragged to the car and lashed by his legs to the rear axle.

"Dumb, sister, *dumb*. If I hadn't seen you and your crowd down there in the square, you'd be waiting for your ship to buy you back again as soon as the fight is over."

"Really?"

"Yeah, really," said this rude and dirty thin man.

"You mean he would have held me for ransom?"

"You get it, sister. Now take off that damned rig-out and get into my pants."

"But—I can't. I've nothing on."

"Jesus! Forget your damned modesty. You're in a jam. Snappy, now!"

As he spoke, he undid his belt, letting his trousers drop to the ground. Then he peeled off his loose, dirty jacket and stood before her practically naked save for a pair of shorts. In a daze, Miss Brewster pulled on the trousers he held out to her, and wrapped herself in his white jacket.

"Roll 'em up. Fix 'em any way, just so's you can run. Now grab this hat and run, sister."

He pulled off his battered Panama and revealed a head of close-cropped, straight blond hair. Dirt covered his features; but there was something about him—What was it?

MISS BREWSTER allowed him to pull his hat over her head. It fitted, more or less. He held her off at arms'-length, peering at her.

"You'll do. You look like the devil, but you'll get away with it. Now you run like hell down that street, see? You take the first turn to the left and run to the next street. You turn right there and keep on running until you get to the docks. You'll find your boat at Pier Five, about two hundred yards down the shore. Climb aboard and stay there. You'll just make it before hell breaks loose here. Now *run!*"

Miss Brewster stood still.

"Oh, I can't tell you how thankful I am—"

"Nuts, lady. Shove off. *Run!* Get to hell out of here!"

She ran.

He watched her disappear. He stood there and grinned a little.

"Poor little sap," he said in English, and then he too turned and ran quickly, in another direction.

Naked save for his shorts, the Lean Man ran toward the center of town. He stopped only long enough to rub handfuls of dirt over his sweaty body. He tucked his automatic into the binding of his shorts, but in his hand he carried a tiny camera that looked like a small pistol.

There was noise ahead of him. There was the sound of shooting. There were screams and the roaring of a multitude. There was the chatter of machine-guns and the slow *crack-crack* of a heavier piece, or possibly several, from the direction of the harbor.

THE American Development company offices at San Lucas are impressive—*were* impressive, is more accurate. They were built of imported tile bricks and contained two elevators, and they gave on the broad square in front of the market-place. President Alvardo, for twenty-five years chief executive of the country and all-powerful dictator of the land, had cleared a fortune of two billion bolivars or about sixty million dollars, amassed enough power to keep him without rival as a perpetual president who, by use of torture, armed forces and bribery, could even dispense with elections, and had built a structure of frank, undisguised racketeering that made Al Capone and his crew seem like a bunch of pikers—all through "arrangements" with American companies. But in December the president had died. On that day also died the structure of his power. And the next day—the actual day of which we write—all the stifled, tortured, starving, groaning populace of the country broke out like an overwhelming tide, destroying every vestige of the régime which had brought them such suffering. On that day the symbol of Alvardo treachery—the building of the American development concession—was torn stone from stone, brick from brick.

There was madness in the square. The Lean Man felt it as he approached. Like stalks of corn laid by a storm, bodies were strewn on the cobbles. Some were still writhing. Here and there was a severed arm or leg or even a bloodied head, shorn by insane machetes wielded by blood-mad peons. Puffs of smoke, sharp explosions from down by the bay, were followed by little pellets of death in the square as the former president's yacht—now a temporary gunboat—fired small shells into the mob. But the maddened swirl of brown men ignored them.

In his muddied shorts, naked from waist to head, streaked with dirt, grimy of foot, the Lean Man was unnoticeable

in the seething mob. His gun clung against his stomach, tight in the band of his shorts. His little camera was clasped in his hand. He pressed forward with the mob, shouting their cries, calling their calls, pretending to sing their weird chants of half-savage defiance and triumph.

Forward he pressed into a tightly massed knot across from the Cathedral. A huge telephone-pole, weighing perhaps a ton, was being lifted and swung by hundreds of brown hands. The Lean Man's camera clicked.

"Uno!"

The mob about them took up the count.

"Dos!"

The wielders of the pole swung back on their feet, braced themselves.

"Tres!"

One hundred legs swung into motion in a crescendo of speed. The very momentum of the pole's weight threw them forward, faster and faster. Twenty, fifty, a hundred feet! Then with a sound of a ripping, tearing explosion, the battering ram crashed into the brick wall of the development company building, shattering it, tearing a vast hole in it. Little mad brown men, armed with axes and sledges and machetes, poured into the breach. A few scattered shots sounded inside. Then screams. Windows crashed. Live bodies were hurled to the pavement, from two or three stories above, to be trampled under the feet of the mob. In ten minutes the building was a shambles. ... There is no flame more fierce than the anger of a downtrodden people betrayed.

FIVE times the Lean Man's tiny camera had clicked—five impressions of mob-madness registered on miniscule glass squares.

The scream of a klaxon horn sounded.

An automobile roared into the square, carrying the red flag of revolt. The crowd gave way before it. A man in tropical garb stood up in the tonneau and bellowed at the crowd, waving his arms. The Lean Man listened to the crackling Spanish.

"People of Colivuela! Men of San Lucas! The capital is taken. The garrison has surrendered. The body of the oppressor Alvardo has been dragged through the city streets. I have a radio message of the complete success of the Revolution. Sevella's governor has fled. The people rule the city. Puerto Cabezas is ours. Four gunboats, seized by our men, are on their way to San Lucas to destroy the odious yacht of the oppressor which is in this harbor. The day of freedom has dawned for us. The spirit of Bolívar is leading us to victory!"

The speaker was the man who had kidnaped little Miss Brewster! The Lean Man wondered whose automobile he had stolen. Things happen rapidly in those hot, febrile countries. A prisoner yesterday, a petty thief and would-be kidnaper half an hour before, a public messenger now. . . . He might be president, dictator or even emperor tomorrow.

The little camera clicked once more.

"You men of Colivuela, you trodden men who have felt the sting of Alvardo's whips, whose limbs have been crushed in his torture machines—"

The sonorous voice chanted on.

"—let us destroy the friends of the oppressor. Let us break their houses as you have broken this building, symbol of his betrayal."

The mob roared.

DOWN the broad avenue that reaches the length of the town, far down the vista of palm trees, came another screaming sound of a klaxon. A big American-made truck was tearing toward the square. Clusters of brown people packed the truck, fairly dangling from its sides. Brakes screamed. The truck skidded to a halt, was swallowed by the masses. The Lean Man could see four white people huddling together in it. Hundreds of hands snatched them to the pavement. One, an elderly man with a dignified white Van Dyke and mustachios, now tinged with red blood, was dragged to the center of the mob, amid howled imprecations.

The Lean Man recognized that face. He had seen it in the newspapers. It was José-Maria de Cavaldos, long minister of State under the Alvardo régime. He uttered no protest. He was spat upon. Dirt and filth were thrown upon him. Hands dragged him to the car. He was thrown to the ground, lashed by his legs to the rear axle. And the car, motor roaring venomously, dragged that bruised, aged body around the square while the multitude screamed its maddened approval.

The Lean Man's camera clicked again.

He pushed his way toward the truck. Two young men and a girl were standing beside it, hemmed in by sweaty, ragged brown natives. They had agony in their faces. They watched their father's slow,

tortured death, dazed and unable to believe. The Lean Man worked his way close to them. As he reached their guard, the automobile of the mob leader had stopped, and the crowd, all together, surged forward to seize the limp, lifeless form of Cavaldos from the dust. They tore it loose from its lashings and carried it to the Cathedral. They strung it up and left it dangling, head downward, from a grotesque gargoyle that overhung the great portal, while the crowd yelled insanely.

Even the guard around the young prisoners yelled their mad joy at this spectacle. At this instant, the Lean Man thrust his automatic into the hand of the taller of the two young men, whispering rapidly to him in Spanish:

"Your one chance. The ship *Zaraza* sails in an hour. Make it if you can."

Then, clicking his camera once more, he slipped away, down a side street and was lost.

SIX bells on the *Zaraza*. Dinner-time. The dining-salon was bustling with conversation.

"Really, I've never been so rudely treated in my life," Mrs. Denham was saying. "It was bad enough not to get us a car for the capital—but to force us to stay in that stuffy office for two solid hours!"

"I shall certainly make a written complaint to the Company in New York as soon as we get home," said Mr. Denham. "Furthermore, I shall write to the State Department about the way we were treated. As an American citizen, I have a right to full protection. We all have. Imagine Miss Brewster being treated like this, revolution or no revolution!"

Said Professor Hastings:

"I never saw such dirty, mean little people. If the authorities hadn't started shooting just then we might have gotten into serious trouble. All because they wanted to make us pay a dollar for a bottle of beer, too."

Said Professor Mayhew:

"We'll probably send a detachment of Marines down here to protect the American investments."

Said Miss Brewster:

"I can tell you, I was frightened. I wonder where that fellow who rescued me learned his English. He swore dreadfully at me, too. And was I embarrassed when he made me get into his clothes! Of *all* the experiences!"

Just then Mr. Knowles came into the saloon, together with the radio operator. He was dressed in his worn-looking tweeds. He was, if possible, paler than ever. His brown sun glasses gave him the most stupid kind of an expression.

Said Maxie Stein:

"Howdy, Knowles! Now suppose you tell us *your* experiences. I'll bet you didn't even go ashore to see the fun. Come on now, let's have it."

There was a general grin at the tables.

Mr. Knowles spoke hesitatingly.

"Well," he said, "I did go ashore. I got some of the loveliest postage stamps. They're really beautiful, you know, and I'm a collector. But I thought perhaps it wasn't very safe to go farther than the post office."

Postage stamps! The passengers, even the German couple, nearly collapsed with laughter at that. Captain Van Oot winked at the First Officer, and they both looked amused. Mr. Knowles lowered himself into his seat and timidly asked for the muffins. . . .

At exactly that same hour in New York, in the city room of the largest news syndicate in America, there was great excitement.

Editor Jay Barbour, his hands full of flimsies a foot long, was shouting to Acting City Editor Bill Brandt:

"Good Lord, Bill, what a scoop! Old Spig Knowles stepped right into the middle of that Colivuelan mess. First-person story—eyewitness. Three columns and a running feature good for five days. My God, boy, it's the best break of the year. Look at that!"

Brandt snatched the flimsies.

"Saw 'em drag old Cavaldos' body around the street—"

"Yeah, and he personally rescued Cavaldos' kids—got 'em on the freighter with him. Got their personal stories. Hid 'em in steerage."

"Yeah, and he says he's got fifteen photos. Sending minny plates by air-mail from Curaçao. Boy, it's a wow!"

"Poor old Knowles," commented Editor Barbour, reflectively. "That makes a hell of a vacation cruise for him."

"Doesn't it, though?" agreed Brandt. "But it feeds us with material for that development company campaign."

And the *Zaraza* steamed quietly on with its cruise under the bright, silent, calm, starry skies of the South, carrying City Editor Knowles to the end of his calm, restful vacation.

Another of Fulton Grant's brilliant stories will appear in an early issue.

Head Work

A lively tale of Tiny David and the State police.

By ROBERT R. MILL

CAPTAIN FIELD, the commanding officer of the Black Horse Troop of the New York State Police, drew a heavy line on a crude map.

"Here is the Canadian border."

"Right." The word of assent came from Lieutenant Edward David, who stood peering over one of the shoulders of the troop captain.

"And here," continued Captain Field, making a dot north of the line, "is the probable location of the loading station."

This assertion was greeted with a profound nod from Lieutenant James Crosby, resplendent in the new uniform that denoted his advanced station in life, who stood behind the other shoulder.

"According to my information," Captain Field went on, "the car will cross the border on a dirt road, use the main road to Plazy, and then swing to the east on a dirt road, coming out on the main road again south of Plantville." He drew the route on the map, and indicated a spot on the dirt road. "That should be the best spot to knock off the car."

"Hear what they are running, sir?" asked Lieutenant Crosby.

"Opium," answered Captain Field. "Gum opium. Worth enough to pay the salaries of two lieutenants for about twenty years. And speaking of lieutenants, it is about time several of them did something to earn their salaries. So it might be well not to have any slips on this. Action, and not excuses, is what we want tonight."

Mr. Crosby remained discreetly silent. Lieutenant "Tiny" David, however, had his usual objections to any plan that involved work and responsibility.

"I don't know that country very well," he began.

"Neither do I," Crosby admitted.

Captain Field's silence was ominous, but David ignored it.

"Raining now. Be black as pitch tonight. How are we to find that particular spot on the dirt road?"

Captain Field added some detail to the map.

"Two miles south of Plazy," he asserted. "You have an odometer on your car. It is that dial with a lot of figures on it, and a needle. I'll get one of the men in the garage to explain it to you."

Tiny David sighed with resignation.

Illustrated by Monte Crews

The wanted car was speeding on its merry way along a road that ran parallel to the one upon which the troopers were stationed—and a good hundred yards away.

"Yes sir," he agreed despondently.

"According to my information," Captain Field continued, "the car will start south about midnight; but you better be set some time before that."

Mr. David, with faultless logic, had discovered the only loophole.

"Maybe," he offered hopefully, "the information is phony. Maybe the car won't make the run tonight. Maybe they gave us the tip to pull the patrols over there so they can shoot the car through another way. Maybe—"

"Maybe you'll be with us tomorrow," interrupted Captain Field, "but I doubt it. You won't be if you come in without that car. And that goes for you too, Crosby."

They nodded gloomily, folded up the map and departed.

THE evening was young when the troop-car pulled away from the barracks. Mr. David, a picture of pessimism, was driving. Mr. Crosby, with a face that would have done credit to an undertaker, sat beside him. The back seat was held down effectively by Sergeants Henry Linton and John King, who protested against the weather, the company, the nature of the errand and sundry other things.

Plazy is east of the barracks. The car headed west.

"Thought we were going to Plazy," demurred Mr. Linton.

There was no answer from the front seat.

"Probably going via Rochester," suggested Mr. King. "Only takes us about seven hundred miles out of our way."

This also went unanswered.

"Guess he doesn't speak English," Linton decided. "Well, he hasn't been in this country very long."

The rain was accompanied by a stiff wind, which sent the drops stinging against their faces. They drew their oilskins about them, and huddled together for warmth.

They were twenty miles away from the barracks, and the same mileage had

been added to the distance from Plazy, when the car came to a halt.

"Hop out," Lieutenant David ordered the occupants of the rear seat. "Hop out, and give a convincing imitation of doing a lot of work. Make plenty of noise about it. Yell to Jim and me occasionally, so the customers will get the idea there are a lot of us." He pointed at approaching headlights. "Here comes some business now."

Sergeants Linton and King flagged the car. The driver, apparently, shared their thoughts regarding the procedure. He was returning from a vacation in Canada, and he was anxious to get back to his loft in the garment-trade section.

"This," he remonstrated, "is a fine pizness. A texpayer gets stopped by dressed-up loafers what he pays. And I am esking you, how vas I to know that you aint two of these bandit-bums?"

Sergeant Linton examined registration card and driver's license in the glow from his flashlight.

The driver appealed to his wife on the rear seat:

"Rachel, look at the dressed-up loafers. Raincoats yet; what the texpayers pay for! And we should pay for—"

"Hush, Morris!" came the counsel from the rear.

It was disregarded. The silence of the two troopers gave the driver courage. The tirade became personal abuse. It was punctuated with profanity.

"Hush, Morris!"

A small boy sitting beside his mother raised a plaintive wail.

BUT the driver continued the abuse. Having exhausted the defects of the two men, he turned his attention to their families. And it was then that Linton's temper, already under considerable strain, flared up.

His hand grasped the driver by the collar, and raised him from the seat.

"Oy!" came the shrill cry from the boy. "He steal da poppa!"

A guffaw from Sergeant King caused Linton to relax his hold. His anger gave way to amusement. The driver shared that amusement.

"Sorry," Linton muttered. "But you should be glad to see us out here on a night like this."

"That's right," the driver admitted. "It makes safeness from them bandit fellows. Look, Rachel, at the nice officers."

Sergeant King chuckled.

"Go ahead," he ordered.

Their succeeding customers were: a boy and a girl on their way to a dance; a gentleman barely on the safe side of being an intoxicated driver; a lady to whom the ordeal could not have been very trying, for she suggested prolonging it at her home near by, from which her husband would be absent for some hours; a gentleman of color, who protested because, "You-all never does take no black boys in your outfit, does you?" and a farmer returning from market.

NOW Tiny David called a halt to the proceedings.

"Get in," he ordered.

Linton gazed at him sadly.

"Tiny,"—he called his superior officer by the nickname,—"there are times when I think you aren't quite right in the head. Other times, I am sure of it. This is one of those times."

Lieutenant David deigned to explain:

"Word travels fast sometimes. Want word to get around that a lot of us are working in this neck of the woods. Now we'll beat it for Plazy."

Lieutenant Crosby turned half around to add a footnote.

"Sergeants," he declared, with heavy dignity, "don't think of little things like that. Lieutenants do. That's why they are lieutenants."

Mr. Linton snorted loudly.

"The only thing you have done so far is sit. If we had a sandbag in your place, the car would ride better." He appealed to his companion. "What is the trade-in value on a new lieutenant, Jack?"

Mr. King pondered.

"The only thing you can figure on," he declared, "is the nuisance value."

The long drive was enlivened by a two-mouthed discussion, during which Messrs. Linton and King weighed the qualifications of Crosby for the position he held, commented freely on his conduct since assuming that office, speculated at length upon his probable tenure of office. And after differing on several minor issues, they agreed that Captain Field must have been in a state closely akin to senile decay when he recommended Crosby for a commission; that the few human qualities Crosby ever possessed had departed upon his promotion; and that the first of the month —then eight days distant—would find him again a sergeant, or—this was more probable—no longer a member of the Black Horse Troop.

All this was settled to the satisfaction of the rear seat only when the lights of Plazy appeared in the distance. Tiny David was guiding the car around the village when Crosby made his first contribution:

"Naturally, you boys will want to be around to watch your prophecies come true. When I make out the stable-list Monday, I'll see that you both are on it. Nobody can say I forget old friends."

The purr of the motor, the rattle of the rain, the whistle of the wind, but no conversation from the rear seat featured the progress of the car as Tiny David headed south on the dirt road. Two miles beyond the village he stopped.

"Black as a lieutenant's heart," declared Crosby.

IT was indeed dark, an inky blackness that made the trees on both sides of the road indistinguishable daubs.

"No lights," warned Tiny David, who had switched off the headlights.

They groped about in the dark until they found a patch of smooth grass at the side of the road, upon which they backed the troop-car, which was headed south.

"Now we will get organized," Tiny David declared. "King, you stay in the car. Keep the motor running. Linny, feel your way about three hundred feet back on this road. Sing out when you are in position. Jim, you get set about two hundred feet this side of Linny. I'll be here, not far from the car."

He added a warning:

"This is strange country to all of us. When you get to your station, paw around and make sure you are on solid ground."

They voiced their assent.

"When, and if, the car appears," Tiny David continued, "Linton will flag it. It is a safe bet they won't stop. Take to the ditch in plenty of time. Jim, you get next smack at it. Remember where the ditch is; you probably will need it. I bat next. And if there is any shooting to be done, I'll do it. Understand?"

They admitted they did.

"If you have to jump, follow regular procedure. Pick yourself up, and run to the chase-car, so we can get after them quickly. And one more thing: hug the shadows so his headlights won't pick you up in time for him to turn around and beat it back where he came from. Guess that's all. But don't try to think. I'll do that for the party."

They started out for their stations, making pertinent remarks regarding northern New York weather.

"Okay!" came the call from Linton. Crosby repeated it.

"Right!" shouted Tiny David.

They stood silently at their several positions, straining forward in an effort to pierce the gloom. Their eyes found nothing to relieve the blackness. Traffic upon the dirt road was non-existent.

An hour passed. It seemed an age. Over his shoulder Tiny David could hear the low purr of the motor as it turned over at idling speed. All other noises were contributed by nature. And as the night dragged along, the temperature dropped. They pulled the collars of their oilskins about their necks, and longed for their sheepskins.

Then, so low that it was hardly audible, there came a whining noise from the north. It grew in volume. Soon it was possible to distinguish it as the noise of a motor being driven at top speed. The engine of the troop-car sputtered, and then settled into a monotonous hum as Sergeant King speeded it up, preparatory to the expected chase.

Three men, separated from each other by spaces of inky darkness, went through motions that were almost identical. They tightened their gun-belts. The left hand of each man was thrust into the pocket of his oilskins, from which it emerged clasping a flashlight. Then, with muscles tense, they waited.

The whine of the approaching motor became a roar. The car was hidden from them by a hill, the top of which, veiled by the darkness, loomed before them.

There was no doubt in their minds but that this was their quarry. The reckless speed at which the approaching car was being driven argued that its occupants were on an illegitimate errand. Their very presence on this out-of-the-way road screamed aloud the fact that something was amiss.

THE hearts of the troopers beat a little faster. Forgotten was the grumbling. The rain and cold mattered not at all. Human pygmies prepared to test their strength against a rushing monster of steel: wasps about to attack an elephant. Perhaps they had a fleeting thought for a tablet that bears the names of other men in gray, who once attempted what they were about to do, and with results that were not pleasant. They pushed

The girl laughed. "What's a mere customhouse among friends?" she asked.

that thought aside. This was action; and they loved it.

Two shafts of light, struggling in the moist darkness, shot over the crest of the hill. The shafts of light leveled off. They were deflected downward. They became more brilliant as they approached.

Linton deserted the shadows at the side of the road and started forward. He walked warily, taking care not to allow his form to loom in the direct path of the lights.

And then it happened!

The two shafts of light veered to the left. Instead of continuing south toward the troopers, they raced toward the west. Then—it seemed almost at once, to the troopers—the lights swung around again, heading south. And the wanted car was speeding on its merry way along a road that ran parallel to the one upon which the troopers were stationed—and a good hundred yards away.

There was no time for orders. None were needed.

Crosby and Linton raced across a dark field, hoping to come out on the other road before the car had passed.

Crosby made it first. His flashlight threw out a warning. He shouted the command:

"Halt! State police!"

He drew himself up abruptly as he realized the ray of light and the command both were directed at the rear of a speeding car, the driver of which was completely unaware of his presence.

Linton fared the same.

He and Crosby met, swore softly, and then raced back to where the chase-car had been stationed.

Meanwhile, Messrs. David and King had done what they rightly considered some smart thinking. As David piled into the car, King headed south. This road, they reasoned, probably had a connection with the other road to the south, as well as the one to the north, over which the dope car had traveled. Furthermore, if they headed north to the other detour, they would have a stern chase, and a hopeless chase.

All of which was excellent reasoning. Knowledge of that fact consoled them as they raced southward. But their logic had one fault. They realized that as they pulled to an abrupt halt, just in time to avoid striking a barn, which was located where the road ended.

So Messrs. David and King swore softly, turned the car around, and retraced their steps. They were joined by Messrs. Crosby and Linton. The conversation was at least spirited.

Mr. Linton suggested continuing the chase. Mr. David vetoed the suggestion, pointing out that the car had a lead it would be impossible to overcome.

At this point some bitterness crept into the dialogue:

MR. KING: "I was ordered not to do any thinking. Otherwise, I would have pointed out that we might have improved the shining hours by making sure we were on the right road, and looking for crossroads and detours."

MR. CROSBY: "Point that out when the Skipper holds the autopsy. It may save you your stripes and your job."

MR. KING: "I didn't get my job or my stripes by pointing things out, and I don't have to hold them that way."

MR. CROSBY: "Let's pretend I didn't say that, Jack. I am sorry."

MR. KING: "Forget it, Jim."

MR. DAVID: "Let's pretend one of us has a bright thought."

MR. LINTON: "Now that the best minds have nothing to offer, how about getting to a telephone and putting a general alarm on the teletype? A patrol down the line might pick that baby up."

MR. DAVID: "Ever see an advertisement in a newspaper that read like this? 'I am incompetent. I have muffed my job. I wish somebody else would do it for me.'"

MR. LINTON: "I can't recall ever reading anything just like that."

MR. DAVID: "What you suggested would be the same thing."

MR. LINTON: "I am going up and have a look at that corner. I want to see how we got switched to a private road."

MR. KING: "Save some of the mud. You can show it to your grandchildren some day; tell them it came from the corner that cost Grandpappy his job."

MR. CROSBY: "Personally, I have no desire to look at the road. I know it is there. The fact that a dope car went over it at eighty miles an hour proves that it is there. I am quick like that."

MR. KING: "The Old Man is quick, too."

MR. CROSBY: "Right. You birds were wrong when you said I would be all washed up by the first of the month. It will happen tomorrow—today, rather. The Skipper promised it to Tiny and me if anything like this happened. Maybe you two lesser items will get off with semi-permanent assignments to the stables. After all, we were supposed to be doing your thinking for you. As we will point out."

"All right," said Tiny David. His voice was gruff. "Can the inquest." He made a mental reservation that full blame for the proceedings would rest on the shoulders of one Lieutenant Edward

David, and nowhere else. "Let's get organized. Speaking as a committee of one, I don't yearn to go in and report how stupid we were. Furthermore, I don't subscribe to telling the Old Man we didn't see the car. We might get away with it, but I like to be able to look at myself when I shave in the mornings."

They gave ready assent.

"And that," Tiny David declared, "brings us right back to the old stand. Just what is our story? If anybody has a thought, let the little stranger in. There are witnesses."

Apparently no thoughts were knocking for admission.

"What do you suggest, Tiny?" asked Crosby.

"We might get on a boat and go to China."

"Not far enough," Linton objected.

"Any law against us getting a cup of coffee?" asked Crosby. "They always let the condemned man select what he wants for his last dinner."

They were seated in the car, and about to start for Plazy, when a second pair of headlights appeared to the north. These

"We pretended to swallow the story," said Tiny David; and he stifled a yawn.

lights moved slowly. They were barely making headway through the rain.

Tiny David groaned.

"Might as well go through the motions. Come on."

Their cry, "Halt—State Police!" was answered at once. The car pulled to the side of the road and stopped.

Tiny David, flashlight in hand, advanced. "Hello, there."

He threw open the door of the car, and the light revealed the occupants of the front seat. A young man, smartly dressed, was at the wheel. A stunning-looking girl sat very close to the driver.

"Streamlined," was the softly spoken comment of Mr. Crosby, who stood behind the man with the flashlight.

"What's the big idea?" Tiny David asked.

The youth appeared to be overcome with embarrassment, but the girl giggled.

"It sounds foolish now," she admitted, "but at the time it seemed like a swell idea. We were at a party. We didn't want to go home. So we went for a ride."

Tiny David stepped to the front of the car, and then returned.

"Canadian license," he muttered. "How did you get through the Customs? They close at midnight."

The girl laughed again.

"What's a mere customhouse among friends?" she asked. "We'll be back before they are open. We are just going to Plantville to get a bite to eat."

Tiny David shook his head.

"Bad business. Confiscate your car, if they catch you. And you never know what you will run into. Just to show you, a dope-car shot through here not so long ago."

The girl's eyes widened. "Really?"

"Yes, really. Suppose you had been mixed up in an accident with it, and couldn't show any clearance-papers to enter this country?"

The girl nodded soberly.

"It wasn't such a bright idea," she admitted. "Home for us—eh, Victor?"

Tiny David chuckled.

"I'm no killjoy," he asserted. "But let's make it regular. Tell you what we'll do: I'll ride back with you to the border. We will wake them up—they are friends of mine—and get you cleared properly. After that, let your conscience guide you. And the night is young."

"That's swell," the girl declared. "But it makes a lot of trouble for you."

"Costs me nothing but time," Tiny David objected. "Have lots of that.

Expect to have even more later." He turned to his companions. "Wait here for me. Won't be gone long."

He walked toward the rear door of the car, ready to enter. The voice of the girl halted him. It was soft, musical and enticing.

"Plenty of room here beside me. But perhaps you would rather be alone."

Tiny David grinned.

"I can't think of anything nicer," he declared, as he crowded in beside the girl. . . .

It was a short run to the border. A sleepy Canadian official protested at first, and then agreed to clear the car, as a favor to Tiny David. The Lieutenant handed the paper to the driver.

"That means you are all through with us?" the trooper asked.

The official nodded.

Tiny David walked south to the American customs. His call soon aroused an official, and the lights on the porch were snapped on. The American official who appeared was less inclined to be agreeable. He yielded under the running fire of Tiny David's comments.

The car pulled up beside the trooper.

"Now," said Tiny David, "if you will run me back to my gang, you two can be on your merry way. Much nicer to know you are on the right side of the law, isn't it?"

The girl moved over to make room beside her. The light from the porch of the customhouse illuminated the rear of the car. Tiny David leaned over and apparently picked up something from the road.

"That's funny," he said. His deep chuckle was contagious. "Step out here a minute, you two; I want to show you something."

ON the running-board of the police-car sat Crosby, King and Linton, wrapped in gloom as dark as the night.

"Fixing up those dimwits," declared Mr. Crosby, "is my idea of the last straw. I would have taken them in as an alibi. That would prove we had at least been here."

Silence greeted this announcement.

"Tiny," continued Mr. Crosby, "drives off in a closed car, sitting next to a slinky-looking dame, and leaves us out in the rain. Fine—"

"Shut up!" growled King. "It helps kill time, doesn't it? And the more time we kill, the longer it will be before we get our chance to stand on a carpet and tell all, as the newspapers so quaintly say."

They killed more time. The first traces of a cloudy dawn banished the inky blackness. The rain abated. There was no sign of Tiny David and his wards, but a car approached from the south.

They turned, and watched it draw near. Mr. Linton made the discovery.

"Mrs. Linton!" he moaned. "Watch over your erring son! That's the Skipper's car!"

Quickly they scrambled to their feet. It was an abashed trio that greeted the commanding officer of the Black Horse Troop as he stepped from his car. Behind him, making signs that this was an occasion upon which no levity would be tolerated—signs for which there was not the slightest need—came Max Payton, the top sergeant.

CROSBY, the obligations of rank heavy upon him, stepped forward a little to bear the full brunt of the expected onslaught.

"How is it going?"

"Fair, Captain."

"Any luck?"

"Not so much luck, Captain."

"Humph!"

There was a heavy, poignant silence.

"Where is Lieutenant David?"

"He should be back any minute, Captain."

They saw the old familiar signs—signs they had witnessed ever so often, and signs which always foretold trouble for the persons who watched them. Captain Field's face flushed. His arms began to swing. He paced up and down, then halted before Lieutenant Crosby.

"Can you answer one question intelligently?"

"I think so, Captain."

"Don't tell me that," snapped Captain Field. "You can't think. I send you four nitwits out here to stop one car. And what happens. I'll tell you—"

He halted abruptly as a sedan, approaching from the north, pulled to a halt beside him. The rear door opened. Tiny David climbed slowly out. He saluted as he saw Captain Field. That operation completed, he yawned.

"Morning, Captain."

The silence that followed the greeting was ominous.

"Weather seems clearing up a bit."

Captain Field, they gathered, was not interested in the weather.

Tiny David cast about for a safe topic of conversation.

"Haven't seen a morning paper, have you, Captain? Murder trial out in Denver that I am following. They summed up yesterday, and—"

THE long-delayed explosion shook the earth. It started with a picturesque account of the deficiencies, mental and physical, of four men. It continued with a list of their transgressions. It included an announcement regarding their futures. It concluded with the indictment:

"Sent out to get a car. . . . Told where to go. . . . Told what time it was due. . . . Three of you asleep. . . . Other one riding around with a girl. . . . Car runs right through you. . . . Driver didn't even see you. . . . We pick him up five miles south of Plantville. . . . Car empty then. . . . Probably unloaded after he made monkeys out of you."

Captain Field paused for breath. The faces of Crosby, King and Linton were studies in dismay. Payton silently conveyed his sympathy. Tiny David registered polite interest.

"Was the Captain referring to that pilot-car?"

Captain Field wheeled upon him.

"Was I referring to what?"

Tiny David sighed. All this, his manner indicated, was quite a chore, but he would attack it boldly.

"The pilot-car, Captain. Went through here like a bat out of hell. But we didn't bite on it. We figured he was empty."

"Indeed!" There was a wealth of sarcasm in that single word, but apparently it was wasted.

"No, Captain; we stood back in the shadows and kissed our fingers at him. He figured this road was clear. He stopped in Plantville, and put in a telephone-call to the guy driving the car with the load. Glad you knocked off the pilot-car, Captain. That's what I call real coöperation."

He jerked a thumb toward the sedan.

"Soon as they got the word, this crowd started through. Smart people. Clean-looking fellow. Swell girl. Drive slow, so they won't attract attention. Have a good story all ready."

He gave up his struggle against the weariness that assailed him, and sank to the running-board of the dope-car.

"So sure of themselves that they don't even try to beat it when I flag them. We pretended to swallow the story, and I rode back with them to clear the car at the Customs. . . . Went alone so they wouldn't think we suspected anything.

"They were agreeable enough. Got them straight with Canada. Did that so they won't be able to claim the load. Fixed them up with our side of the line. That gives us clear title to the haul."

He laughed softly.

"Sort of a lowdown trick on those boys at the Customs. They didn't give the car the once-over because they saw I was in it, and they figured it must be okay. Well, we owe them that for some other deals they pulled on us."

He stifled a yawn, and continued:

"Two prisoners, Captain. Nice people. Girl with finishing-school looks and voice. Plenty of what Mae West uses. Boy with best university club manner. Nice haul, I call it.

"Car loaded with gum opium. Stuffed under the back seat and in the trunk on the rear. Big consignment. So sure of themselves they even carried part of the load open on the floor of the back compartment."

The yawn was repeated.

"We were just getting ready to run them to Plantville and book them when the Captain drove up. All right if we go ahead, sir?"

Captain Field's eyes were twinkling.

"Yes." He walked toward his car, accompanied by Sergeant Payton.

LIEUTENANT CROSBY moved close to Tiny David.

"When did you tumble to it, Tiny?" he whispered.

Tiny David spoke without moving his lips:

"Thought it was funny she went to so much trouble to vamp me and get me in the front seat. Wasn't sure, but when she pulled it again up at the line, I knew something was funny. Then the light flashed on those tins on the back floor and I was sure."

Captain Field leaned from his car, and motioned to Tiny David. The big man walked to his side.

"Where did you pick up the horseshoe, Tiny?"

An injured expression crossed Tiny David's face.

"I didn't have a horseshoe, Captain. Didn't need it." His thumb indicated his companions. "This is a smart patrol. Use their heads every minute. Head-work gets you more than horseshoes."

Another of Robert Mill's inimitable stories will appear in our next issue.

ARMS and MEN

By H. BEDFORD-JONES

CAPTAIN BILL WILLIAMS lives down at San Pedro, that haven of retired ocean skippers. He dropped in to see me the other night, bringing along a package, a suitcase, and his trim little Swiss wife. Bill is husky, red-haired, looks like a bruiser—and has the biggest heart that ever took a sailing-ship around the Horn.

"You need help, mister," he said after the second drink, "and I've come to the rescue. These stories of yours in BLUE BOOK, about significant weapons that have guided the world's history, have passed up some good bets. You need a Naval Reserve officer like me to chart your course. Now, here's a weapon that affected history, commerce, navigation, exploration and everything else."

He opened up his package to disclose a ship model. Not a highly varnished model of imitation sails and gimcracks, but a dingy, honest, ugly creature battered by time and circumstance.

I looked at it and shook my head.

"Sorry, Bill. You mean well; but a ship isn't a weapon."

"Yeah? The blind man says the elephant is a flea," commented Bill cheerfully. "A horse, a catapult, a battering-ram, all are weapons. Troy was taken by a wooden horse. An airplane or tank is a weapon, like a submarine. The Viking ship was a weapon that scourged the world."

"You could extend the theory to earthquakes or financial systems," I said.

"As the Emperor of Abyssinia tried to do," commented Bill, and touched the old ship model before him. Two masts, a long, low hull. "The battle of Lepanto, which crushed the Turkish sea-power forever, was fought with oared galleys. And that finished oared ships. Something new developed that killed 'em forever. This was it."

"A sailing-ship?" I looked at the model. She had a huge spread of canvas, with auxiliary oars. "Nothing new here, Bill. Ships always had sails."

"Nothing's ever new; it's the application," he rejoined. "It's the human and individual element that's novel. A man, a woman, this ship—and the course of history was controlled by them for two hundred years. A very definite weapon, this. A weapon of hatred, love, terror. A weapon with a story."

"Where's the story?" I demanded skeptically. Bill Williams waved his hand at the suitcase he had fetched along; it contained a lot of books.

"It's there. But wait, feller! You've been to Morocco?"

"Four years ago."

"Uh-huh." And Bill nodded solemnly. "Well, I got this ship model from a guy in Rabat; he had stolen it out of a place in the town across the river—Sale, where the Sallee Rovers came from. My ship had come up from Senegal, and the engines went bust, and we laid a month in that rotten little river."

He paused to give his wife an affectionate grin.

"Marie got the story for me; those books are French. I don't savvy them, but she does. She's marked the references for you. Since the French took over Morocco they've dug some queer things out of its history. One of those books has photostats of a letter from the Sultan of Morocco to James II, offering to put him back on the English throne if he'd become a Mohammedan. And more important, the yarn of Simon Danser."

"Never heard of him," I said.

"You will. Some say he was a Hollander named Jensen; but the other name fits better. Well, look at those Sallee Rovers; they came from Spain, from the town of Hornachos. These Hornacheros were kicked out in 1608—an unruly, factious, turbulent tribe. They settled at Sale, vowing eternal hatred to all Spaniards. The present-day Rabat—you know the place. There were a lot of renegades in Morocco then, one whole province being occupied by them; and this Simon Danser was a seaman from Flanders who had made himself solid. You can appreciate the story better, of course, knowing the scene—"

THROUGH this story "The Sallee Rover" you live through a terrific adventure in the company of desperate men—and watch another step in the development of arms that recognizes a ship as a weapon.

Illustrated by
John Clymer

Rais Mami raced to take charge. His guns began to speak; but two of the ships had come close enough to fling grapnels. From their hatches poured up swarms of men; his ship was grappled, boarded.

Did I know the scene? I knew every inch of it, had taken movies of it, had dreamed along its ruins and battlements. The huge cliff on one side of the river-mouth, the cliff overhanging the sea, with its enormous gun-platform on top, the massive ruins of the citadel all around. Across the river lay the old town of Sale, founded by the Romans as Sala Colonia. The dark river ran up between the two towns to that glorious Tower of Hassan, built by the architect of the Giralda in Seville, merely the minaret of a mosque that had vanished. City after city had vanished in this place, leaving each some incredible memento, and naught beside.

A tough gang, those Hornacheros, bred to brigandage. They occupied the town surrounding the citadel on the great rock, and getting together a few oared galleys, began to raid the coasts of Spain by way of revenge for their expulsion. Their small galleys could not breast the Atlantic surges nor meet large ships, yet the Hornacheros would fight anyone and everyone. By 1624 they were a power in the land, giving the Sultan a tenth of all loot and of their Christian slaves.

SO comes Simon Danser, or Rais Mami as he was known in Islam, crossing the bar at high tide and sailing into the river with a thunder of joyful guns —his own galley, shattered and smashed, towed astern of a two-hundred-ton Spanish ship.

He brought her to anchor, and the boats and barges came forth; the slaves and the plunder began to flow ashore. The Hornacheros, dark grim men, welcomed him as a son. Caïd Mustapha, who ruled Sale for the Sultan, stepped aboard the Spanish ship with his swaggering negroid soldiers, and greeted Rais Mami.

A man still young was the renegade Fleming, a ruddy-haired man, alive with vigor and energy. With him, unveiled in the fashion of the Spanish Moors, was a girl who was like a flame: a captive, Almira by name, but joyous in her captivity. Rais Mami took her hand, kissed it in knightly fashion, and presented her to the Caïd.

"My plunder, Caïd Mustapha, with the blessing of Allah!" he said proudly. "She is my share of this booty—I claim no more."

Caïd Mustapha, however, took one look at the girl and praised Allah aloud.

"Seek some other," he said carelessly. "By the beard of the Prophet, this girl is for Sultan Zidan alone! She shall go into the quarters of the women in the citadel, until the next caravan is ready to take her to Fez."

"What?" cried Rais Mami in hot anger. He tore off his tunic, to show a bloody scarf about his chest. "Look you, Caïd Mustapha! I bought this woman with my own blood; I took her from a Spanish town, from the midst—"

"Peace," said the Caïd, with a sign to his guards. "It is the law that one tenth of all spoil goes to the Sultan, and that his tenth shall be the first chosen. Seek another woman, I tell you—unless you choose to sit upon a stake. You brigands from Hornachos are lucky to have this haven of refuge."

Rais Mami slipped out sword, in a fury of passion, but the bandage came from his wound, there was a rush of blood, and he fell fainting. When he recovered, the Caïd was gone, and Almira with him, and the matter was closed.

From this situation arose history. . . .

True, Rais Mami went to the citadel and had audience with Caïd Mustapha, and came near to his death there. For his insolence he was barred from the citadel, and being a renegade, was put under close surveillance, although not molested. He was a renegade and not one of the Hornacheros, but they had taken him into their number and made much of him. They did not relish the treatment given him, nor the scorn in which the Caïd held them; they themselves did not love these Moroccans, by a good deal.

Time passed, and Almira remained in the citadel, since no caravan could leave for Fez until the rains were over. Rais Mami went much about the town, brooding, talking with the Hornacheros, talking with the Flemings and English, the

"Peace!" said the Caïd.

Dutch and the Genoese. This was the twilight of Morocco's golden age, when consuls and traders of half Christendom gathered there and welcome; and Rais Mami the renegade could talk with them all in their own tongues. Morocco hated the Spaniards, but hated no other Christians in that day.

Nursing his wound, Rais Mami spent much time in the shipyard up the river. The captured Spanish ship was turned over to him, and he put men to work upon her; he was busy with the Dutch merchants, with renegades, with captive seamen; and he carried about with him the little model of a ship he had contrived, patterned after the Spanish ship which he was remodeling.

That he was deeply in love with Almira, that she returned his affection, was no secret; it was, indeed, something of a joke among the Moors, whose jests are cruel. . . . Rais Mami, however, never opened his mouth on the matter, but if by chance his gaze fell upon Caïd Mustapha, his bronzed features whitened and a glitter came into his eyes. He could gain no access to the citadel, nor to Almira; but sometimes he could catch sight of her. Not even the heavy cloaking garb and veil of Moroccan women could disguise her figure or her fine free walk.

She would come into the Street of the Consuls, leading from the tremendous square gate of the citadel, and pass among the slaves who were marketed in this street—but so well guarded with naked blades that any approach would have been vain. Evidently the Caïd

"This girl is for Sultan Zidan. Seek another woman, I tell you!"

humored her in this notion of hers; she had a great pity for these slaves, and being both Moor and Goth in blood, could give them money and kind words.

Fire-flame as she was, it was all for softer, gentler things in this land of white sun and red blood. She loved the fierce quick race of hissing waves, the straining lift of a ship in storm, the life of little men encompassed on ship's deck by wide horizons; but for hurt folk, or those suffering in chains, she had only a pity as flaming as her hot love.

And Rais Mami, remembering all these things of her, knowing for what inland hell she was destined, writhed in agony and bit his lips to blood.

The work on his ship went apace, though he was not too often watching it. He spent much time in the lovely deep gardens of old Sale, idling with the ship-model he had contrived, while the great water-wheels creaked. The people of this white town over the river liked him; they had no love for the fierce wolfish Hornacheros. The city was one of artisans, and Rais Mami picked out certain men to work in the shipyard, and they were glad. The Fleming had a way with him, and was able to lead, not drive.

Often he went to the flat top of the Tower of Hassan, whence was outspread a view of all the countryside, the towns and gardens, the glittering sea beyond. Here he would work much on his ship-model also. He had his own quarters in the town below the citadel but not among the Hornacheros; he did not see them frequently, for it was no secret that he was being watched.

It was at this time that Rais Mami arranged for a flare to be placed on the ancient tower. He discovered that this high point was visible from various angles outside the bar, and after consulting with the captains of galleys, established a light from the tower as a night-guide to any galleys seeking to cross the bar and enter the river.

"When does the caravan of the Sultan depart?" he asked, as he sat one day in the mosque with grim old Abd el Hak, the one-eyed, a chief among the Hornacheros.

"In five days, my son; so great is the booty that more camels are needed."

"A pity it should go to the Sultan," said Rais Mami darkly. "And some of it will not go. I sent a message to one of the captives this morning."

"Aye," said the old veteran. "By a woman. She was slain an hour ago; the message was not delivered. The Caïd Mustapha talks of punishing your insolence."

Rais Mami looked at him with bloodshot eyes.

"In the name of Allah! Shall I tell you the truth? I am in love with that woman. She loves me."

"God alone knows all things, my son," said Abd el Hak, exploring his gray beard. "One woman is like another. When I was a young man, in Estramadura—"

"You are an old man in Sale," broke in Rais Mami fiercely. "The Sultan is far away, a weak man, his power waning. Here is an impregnable place; tonight, if you will listen, I'll tell you how to

gain greater wealth than the Sultan has, and more power."

"Allah upon you!" exclaimed the other hastily. "Speak not such words here, where every brick is a spy! You yourself are under suspicion. The Caïd has men watching you."

Rais Mami laughed shortly. "Right. I'll speak my mind tonight, among the dead. Bring with you the chiefs of the Hornacheros. It is Friday. The women will be going to pray at the tombs of the old Sultans. In the big hall of the guard inside the Chella gateway are no spies, save the dead. An hour before sunset. Yes or no?"

Abd el Hak fingered his beard, the one grim eye glittering. True, the women would be flocking away to pray at the tombs and gossip. No one would think anything of it if men were among them. He nodded.

"May Allah further the event, my son. We meet you there."

Rais Mami rose and departed from the mosque. Outside, he went to the platform at the seaward verge of the great rock, where cannon were mounted. He looked up at the massive battlements of the citadel. Somewhere there, safely tended, was Almira—destined for the Sultan, as far from his reach as though in the moon.

He turned and looked down. Below, in the river, lay the pirate galleys, and beyond these were three ships, Genoese, English, French, under safe-conduct of commerce. Rais Mami eyed them hungrily, avidly. A few Hornacheros passed, with a word of greeting to him—gaunt, fierce men! Guards of Caïd Mustapha loitered about, keeping a furtive eye on him; swaggering fellows these, fat with misrule. Out across the river rose the white city of Sale against the blue sky. And the glorious red Tower of Hassan lifted two miles away, amid cactus and ruins, like a finger pointing to Allah.

Yet there was a more wonderful memento of the dead to be seen, if one knew where to seek—a scant couple of miles more up the river valley.

RAIS MAMI looked at the pirate galleys again, in contempt. No good in heavy weather, unable to carry guns of weight, they could take raiding parties to the Canaries or the Spanish coast. This was all. The Moroccan raiders could not pass Gibraltar, for the galleys of Algiers and Tunis held all the Mediterranean as their own prey. Yet, had the Sallee Rovers proper ships, the whole world lay open to them.

Presently he turned from the platform, wended his way through the narrow streets around the citadel, left its magnificent gateway, and in the town outside sought his own quarters. Under his robe he tucked the model of a ship on which he had worked. He went presently to the slave market, then to the animal market, and there rented a horse.

Ten minutes later he was spurring toward the uplands, coursing across the long slopes, riding like mad in the keen wind. Any followers were flung off; they would spy on him the minute he returned, of course. He laughed fiercely, exultantly, and spurred the harder.

AN hour before sunset, his horse lathered white with foam, he was circling back toward the town. Before him grew one of the most impressive sights in Africa.

Here had been the ancient city, Chella. Now not a stone of it remained, except a few tombs by the river, and here the city walls, with their gate of victory. The towers of this gate reached up like giant hands to heaven; grotesque, massive, the walls so high that the human creatures below them seemed as dots. Women, white-clad, streamed in and out of that enormous empty gateway, on their Friday errands of prayer and gossip. Like the walls of Carcassonne, these gaunt reddish battlements bespoke an older age, when men by the hundred thousand came pouring out of the Sahara for the conquest of Spain.

Rais Mami pricked his way along the gigantic wall to the gateway. He dismounted and led his horse across the rubble. On the inner side he left the horse. Bare cactus-grown fields stretched here, where the city had stood, down to the olives and the tombs by the river. Not a stone left standing in all this place.

He himself turned aside. Within the gateway, behind it, remained only a tower. He entered this, passing a young Hornachero who stood there silent, a sentry, and was in the ancient hall of the guard.

A dozen men sat there silent, awaiting him. Gaunt men bred in Spain, who hated everything Christian with their whole fierce souls. Like hot-eyed wolves, they were.

Rais Mami came into the midst of them. He saluted them gravely, opened

his robe, and placed on the stone floor the model of his ship.

"In the name of Allah!" he said abruptly, harshly, without any preamble. "Here is the ship I am making. I have chosen a hundred men from among the slaves to handle her canvas and spars, certain Dutch and English renegades to handle her guns. She is to be the first of many. From Sale will go forth these ships, no mere galleys, but ships to fight the Christian world, to sail the wide seas, to plunder French, English, Dutch, as well as the accursed Spaniard!

"Look at these sails," he went on, "of large size and special design. So with the spars. We shall build our own ships here, or build over those that we capture. Here in your hands I put a weapon against the Christian world."

Deep eyes glittered. A man spoke up.

"Build such ships, or build them over, Rais Mami? But that takes materials. Iron, canvas, everything! And guns."

Rais Mami threw down a paper written in Arabic and sealed.

"Read that," said he. "It is an agreement with the Hollanders. They will supply all we need, even to chains for prisoners. In return, we leave their ships alone. They will even provide skilled workmen."

The others crowded about to read the document. One and another caught his breath. Grim Abd el Hak looked up, his one eye a flame, and spoke hoarsely.

"By Allah and Allah and Allah, the Omnipotent! With whom have these Hollanders made the agreement? Not with the Sultan Zidan or with his Caïd, but with a council of Sale, whose names are not yet signed—"

"Sign them," said Rais Mami. "The names are yours. Are you Hornacheros city curs to send tribute to a weakling Sultan? Be wolves, as once you were in Estramadura; but now, wolves of the sea! The citadel is impregnable. Seize it. I have here a list of renegades who understand artillery. Turn the guns on Sale, across the river. Upon this rock of ours erect an independent state, a republic owning allegiance to none! In that caravan destined for the Sultan is wealth enough to make us all rich; seize it!"

THE men who listened were not given to counting costs. The Sultan's authority maddened them. They were conscious of their own outlaw strength. They saw the picture Rais Mami painted for them with cunning words, and their eyes gleamed, their nostrils dilated, the old Arab lust for freedom, plunder and blood laid hold terribly upon their souls.

"Because you love a woman," growled Abd el Hak, "you would plunge us all into death!"

"Into glory—with me!" and Rais Mami laughed harshly. "Refuse, and what happens? Tomorrow night I seize the citadel with my men, kill the Caïd and his guards, take the woman I desire—and go. My ship is nearly ready. If the Hornachero blood has died out, well and good; let the dream pass away. You, who were once wolves—"

"By Allah, does a renegade put shame on my head?" burst forth a voice from the group. "Let me bear fire, but not shame! Slay! Slay! Bear testimony with the sword against all Christians!"

The flood of fanaticism was loosened. Voices rolled up hoarse assent. A certain furious madness came upon all these men, until the ancient stones quivered to the storm of their oaths and wild fury. Thus, in the gateway of the city of the dead, was born the republic of sea-wolves.

DAYLIGHT grew gray upon the old Tower of Hassan, and the white city of Sale, and the towering rock of the battlemented citadel. "Come ye to prayer!" quavered the voice of the muezzin from the minarets. "Come ye to prayer, for prayer is better than slumber!"

Shadows flitted along the foot-wide runways of the battlements. Naked, bearded Hornacheros, white renegades, freed slaves, one and all hated the swaggering soldiery, largely of negroid stock, who served Sultan Zidan. Hatred flamed on the gun-platform, in the fort below the cliff, in the narrow streets about the citadel and castle. A sentinel shrieked and died. A gun roared. Then the tide of slaughter burst forth, and on its wave-crest Rais Mami and his seamen came flooding into the quarters of Caïd Mustapha.

Guards died. Eunuchs were put to the sword. The Caïd himself, scimitar in hand, came rushing upon Rais Mami, and was cut down with one blow. His head was flung to the courtyard below and resistance ended. Treasure and guns, citadel and armory and powder, all was in the horny hands of the Hornacheros.

And if the white city opposite resisted, —as it did,—the guns of the rock were turned to hurl death and destruction. And if the army of the Sultan came,—as it did,—it went home again whipped.

In the quarters of the women, now taken over for new owners, Rais Mami came upon the Spanish girl Almira. Slim and slender she was, with a soul of fire that looked forth from her golden eyes, and Rais Mami dropped his red blade and knelt before her, his fierce features transfigured.

"Life and freedom, Almira!" rang out his voice. "Life and love, and the wide horizon! These are yours and mine from this day forth."

In this fashion, the renegade's dream was brought to fruition. . . .

A bad man, no doubt; an arrant rascal, you would say, whose story was not fit to interest honest men. The point might bear discussion. Morocco had been filled with thousands of his kind—men who fled from feudal rapacity, from tyranny, from hopeless economic conditions, from the lack of any future. Here in Islam, a slave might become an emir, which was answer enough.

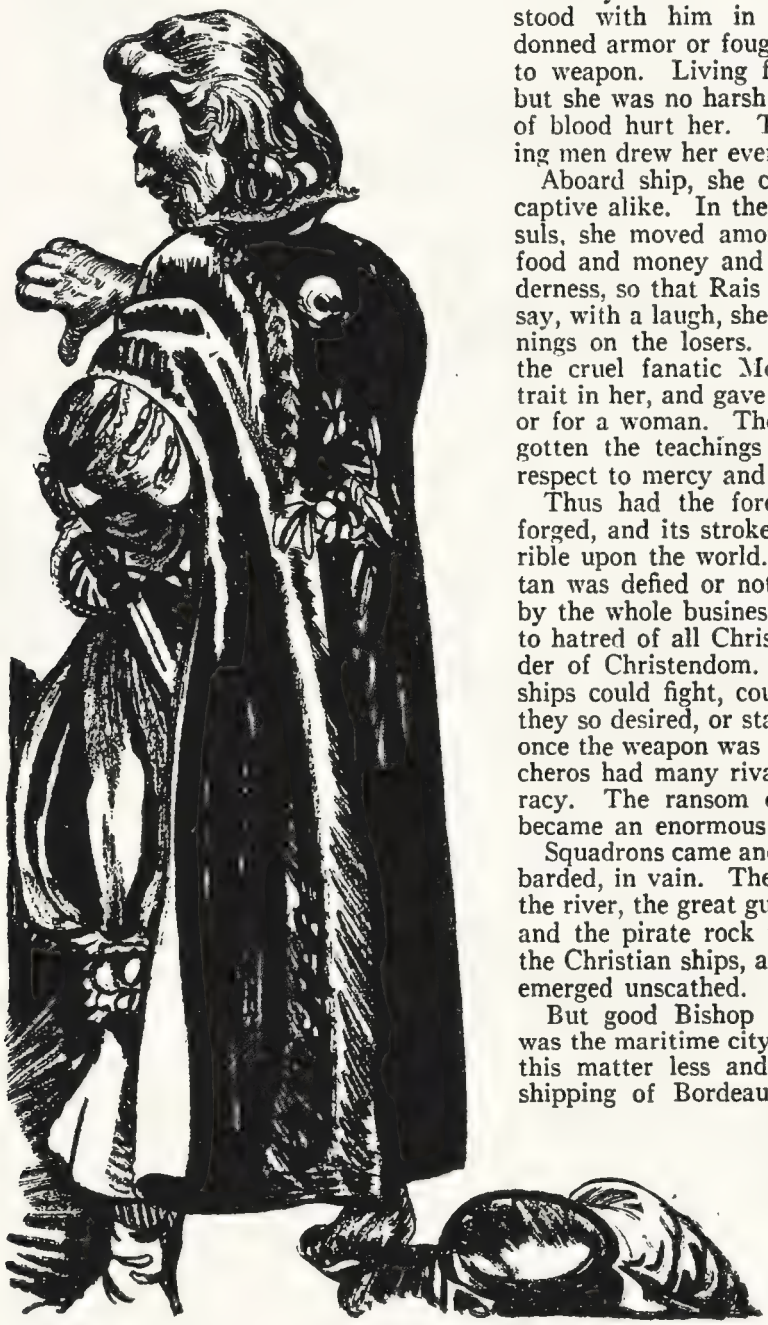
So Rais Mami, the slender fire-filled girl beside him, fell to work at his new weapon, and sailed forth with it to scourge the seas, leaving the new republic to deal with its own problems.

Those men of Hornachos were shrewd and savagely capable, once shown the way. They reduced old Sale to submission, took advantage of the internal dissensions which left the Sultan powerless, and established their pirate state in fact as well as in name. And the loot began to roll in.

With its huge spread of canvas, its speed and armament, its auxiliary oars, the ship of Rais Mami could outsail and outfight the average merchant craft. He opened a new career, a new vista, to these brigands of Morocco. And on the wide seas he ravaged like a wolf in a sheepfold.

The horrified French, the dismayed English, found themselves no longer secure from molestation. Treaties with Morocco were laughed at. Not Rais Mami alone, but other ships armed and equipped like his own, came forth to seek prey—these Hornacheros cared nothing for commerce, except to batten upon it savagely.

The Sallee Rovers fell upon all Christendom, ravening from the Banks of Newfoundland to the coast of Ireland, merciless and insatiable. In two years, forty vessels from Havre-de-Grace alone fed their rapacious maw. In 1626 above sixty prizes jammed the river under the cliff, more than six thousand Christian slaves jammed the slave-market, and wealth incalculable jammed the coffers of the pirate republic.



"Here is the ship I am making," he said abruptly. . . . "Here in your hands I put a weapon against the Christian world. Are you Hornacheros city curs? Be wolves—wolves of the sea!"

For the republic flourished, putting into effect the principles of communism—give nothing and take everything. It laughed at the Sultan. In its own right it made treaties with Charles of England, with Richelieu in France. The Hornacheros were riding high in those days, and highest of them all rode Rais Mami the renegade.

With him went ever Almira, the woman who was like a flame of fire. She seconded him in tempest and in calm, and they two were one. But while she stood with him in battle, she never donned armor or fought, never put hand to weapon. Living fire was her spirit, but she was no harsh virago. The sight of blood hurt her. The sight of suffering men drew her ever to compassion.

Aboard ship, she cared for crew and captive alike. In the Street of the Consuls, she moved among the slaves with food and money and garments and tenderness, so that Rais Mami was wont to say, with a laugh, she spent half his winnings on the losers. Curiously enough, the cruel fanatic Moors respected this trait in her, and gave her unwonted honor for a woman. They had not yet forgotten the teachings of the Prophet in respect to mercy and pity.

Thus had the foretold weapon been forged, and its stroke was keen and terrible upon the world. Whether the Sultan was defied or not, Morocco profited by the whole business, and turned itself to hatred of all Christians, and to plunder of Christendom. These fast armed ships could fight, could raid and run if they so desired, or stay and battle. And once the weapon was learned, the Hornacheros had many rivals in the art of piracy. The ransom of Christian slaves became an enormous source of revenue.

Squadrons came and bombed and bombarded, in vain. The pirates slipped up the river, the great gun-platforms of Sale and the pirate rock thundered down at the Christian ships, and Rais Mami ever emerged unscathed.

But good Bishop Sourdis, whose see was the maritime city of Bordeaux, liked this matter less and ever less, for the shipping of Bordeaux suffered heavily.

And besides his episcopal dignity, he also happened to be commander of the "naval army" of France. Hence, he had some teeth with which to chew on the affair.

This Flemish renegade, said the good warrior prelate, must have his wings clipped; and certainly bishop could take rook. So My Lord Sourdis abandoned crozier and asperges for the present. After certain conferences with the merchants of Bordeaux, he betook himself to the wide green diocese of the Atlantic.

Thus it came to pass that Rais Mami, with the flaming-eyed Almira beside him, looked forth one morning as they cruised the French coast, and beheld four small ships of Bordeaux coming with the breeze, all unsuspicious.

Rais Mami hoisted the Dutch flag, and laughed, for the wind was falling fast, calm was coming down the sea, and once his oars were put forth he had those four small ships at his mercy. Praise be to Allah!

"DO you remember," said Almira, as they stood at the rail, watching, "that model ship you made, long ago, and left at the citadel for the workmen to use in remaking other ships?"

"I should remember it well," said Rais Mami, his eyes softening a little. "Why?"

"It is over the river in Sale," she responded. "I saw it there just before we sailed. It is in the courtyard of the school there—the *medersa* built by the Sultan Abou Inan, three hundred years ago. They have put it near the fountain."

Rais Mami laughed at this, and squinted at the four ships in the sunlight.

"You think of strange things in the hour of battle," said he lightly.

The beautiful eyes of the woman beside him darkened.

"Still stranger things, perhaps," she rejoined. "For the inscription over that fountain in the school was running in my mind. You know it?"

"By Allah, I have other things to ponder!" And Rais Mami chuckled. "What was it?"

"It has nothing to do with battle, at least," she said, "but that lovely little model ship seemed placed most appropriately. The inscription is short: *'The workmen have here finished an artistic work, filled with the beauty of youth.'* Lovely ship, lovely words!"

Rais Mami turned to stare at her curiously.

"What the devil is in your mind? At such a moment as this— Well, you have strange moods, and I love you for them. Come! I'll make you a present of whichever one of yonder ships you fancy. Choose!"

She looked at the four ships, which were grouped together, and her eyes dulled. Then she shook her head and turned away, without reply.

RAIS MAMI, with an impatient oath, sent his Christian slaves to the oars, made ready to run them out, put his men to the lines. The breeze was dying fast. The four ships of Bordeaux, quite unsuspicious, were close at hand, their canvas filling and flapping. The sea was glassy, catspaws of wind creeping across the long swells and fading away. Rais Mami lifted his voice, as the canvas was brought in.

"Out oars! Down ports! Into the midst of them, helmsman!"

The ports clattered open, the guns were run forth, the oars struck out and dipped. From below poured up the corsairs, with beat of drums and shrilling horns, and the Dutch flag fluttered down.

The mask was off. Straight in among the hapless Frenchmen drove the ship, her six guns to a side ready to hurl death. Rais Mami leaped to the rail, to hail those victims and order surrender. They were clumsy ships, those four, heaped high with deck cargo, it seemed.

But as he opened his lips to hail, his voice died.

The four were close around him now. And men were leaping to work. Tarpaulins were jerked away. No deck cargo, but guns, cannon, men pouring up from below, each ship suddenly bristling with figures in the rigging. And before Rais Mami could speak or give command, before he could realize that he was trapped, those four little ships began to pour a deadly storm of bullets into him.

Bullets, no shot; guns crammed with bullets that hailed across his decks, swept into his open ports, struck down his crew and oarsmen, flung everything into mad chaos aboard. Fusils and muskets opened from the rigging around. His decks were a shambles.

Like a madman Rais Mami raced to take charge, to waken his stunned men. His guns began to speak; but two of the smaller ships had put out sweeps and

come close enough to fling grapnels. From their hatches poured up men, swarms of men; his ship was grappled, was boarded.

Desperately, frantically, the remnants of the corsairs gathered. *"Allah il Allah!"* pealed up the cry. Rais Mami headed them, smashed into the boarders, cleared the waist of his ship. Useless! He turned to survey the poop, and a frightful cry broke from him. He saw Almira, there at the rail of the quarter-deck, sinking upon her face, her arms extended as though reaching toward him.

Everything else fled from him then. He turned, leaped across the shambles, gained the ladder, and regained her side. He forgot the battle, the press of men, the whelming of disaster, as he lifted her in his arms. She was dying, smiling as she died, and her eyes flamed up at him with one last long look.

"An artistic work," she gasped, *"filled with—with the beauty of youth—"*

And laughing hysterically, she tried to draw herself up, failed, and went limp in his arms.

He was kneeling there, holding her close, when they came in around him. He saw nothing, heard nothing, until he was suddenly aware that these were Frenchmen who stood all about, staring curiously at him. He started up.

There was no longer a battle. In the waist of his ship, freed slaves were yammering their rejoicings, Christian voices were rising high, men were flooding everywhere—but not his men. These were gone. Rais Mami passed a hand over his eyes, wiped them clear, gazed at the tall Frenchman in half armor who addressed him.

"They say you are their leader. You speak French?"

"They say?" His men, of course; some few captives taken, or the wounded. Rais Mami stared around, then his eyes came back to the tall Frenchman.

"Speak French?" he said dully. "Yes. I am Rais Mami."

A WORD passed, a sharp breath, a mutter. Rais Mami the renegade!

"And I," said the Frenchman, "am the Bishop of Bordeaux. Monsieur, you are my prisoner. Have you anything to say before I hang you?"

Rais Mami looked down at the figure on the deck. His hands fell; he went to one knee, lifted the dead slim hand, and touched his lips to it. Then he stood up again and looked at Bishop Sourdis, and a smile touched his lips.

"Why, yes," said he. "Not your prisoner, My Lord Bishop; but that of God. An artistic work, filled with the beauty of youth—" His voice faltered.

"Blasphemer!" said the Bishop sternly, and beckoned his men. "Hang him."

They hanged him, there above the glassy sea. . . .

The good Bishop accounted his last words blasphemy, and so reported them, with much advice on how the entire pirate roost of Sale should be and might be rooted forth. And yet, curiously enough, they were entirely natural words; a lovely thought that came too late into barren bloody lives, a search for what might have been and was not, a wistful subconscious expression in the moment of destiny's impact. For thus man's brain sometimes works upon trifles.

SO I came back again from my own memories of those battlemented cliffs and the glorious red Tower of Hassan, to Bill Williams and his charming little wife, and the ship-model that Bill was fingering.

"You know," he said, "it's a funny thing—I mean, this here ship-model. Old and dirty and all, but damned well done. Took a seaman to do it in the first place. Wonder where that chap swiped it from? Some old place over in Sale, he told me. I gave him some French Senegal money for it. Paper money."

"It should go into the collection of my friend Martin Burnside," I said slowly. "He collects weapons, you know."

"Yeah. Heard about him," said Bill. "Well, you think a ship can be a weapon?"

I nodded, and took the model from him, and examined it with some attention. Then I glanced up at him, sharply.

"Have you done any carving on this?"

"Who, me?" Bill guffawed. "Not much! Why?"

"Nothing," I replied. "What are the chances of turning this over to Burnside?"

"You're welcome," said Bill, with a wave of his hand. "Give it to him with my compliments."

So I did, and when I gave it to him, pointed out the two letters carved on the stern of the model, as in some idle moment. *"S D"*—that was all. But they made me think of Simon Danser the Flemish renegade—and wonder.

Another colorful story in this remarkable series will appear in our next issue.

The Lair in

An authentic and moving novelette of detective work and air adventure by the pilot writer who gave us "Murder Island," "The Flaming Finish" and "The Speed King."

A CURTAINED black sedan with a bent fender and a shattered rear side window snored out Spring Street, keeping the sedate pace of Saturday-night traffic. The driver, a small man with glittering weasel eyes, paused at a red light, and turned and stared into the shadows of the rear seat, where Joe Marvin and Sylvia Paulling sat, both bound and gagged.

"Listen, you!" the driver said to Joe Marvin, in a voice like a file. "Keep kickin' around back there an' I'll crack you on the konk. I tried to be gentle wid you, see. If you don't like that, I'll fix you so you can't squirm." He reached under his left armpit and a grim look crossed his narrow, pasty face. He put the car once more in gear and rolled with the accelerating traffic.

Joe Marvin sat there, waiting, trying to keep his mind from projecting itself too starkly into the future. There wasn't any hope, he knew, yet he could not surrender abjectly. They had him, of course, and would dispose of him in the safest, easiest way, mercilessly. But he didn't think primarily about what they were going to do to him. He thought about Sylvia. He must do something to help her. . . . Turning slightly, he tried to see her, there in the darkness.

All he could see was the pale blur of her face, with the gag a white swathe over her mouth. She was looking at him, her shadowed eyes showing fright. She really was terrified. She looked more terrified than she had that time when they had been flying in his plane, and the engine caught fire and they had had to bail out. Joe wondered if he would ever have the chance to fly his new plane again. He tried to give Sylvia a confident reassuring glance.

the Swamp

By LELAND JAMIESON

Illustrated by L. R. Gustavson

He saw suddenly that she was slipping down to the tonneau floor. She lay on the floor, on her side, for a moment, and began to get up. Puzzled, he assisted her when he could by pushing her up with his knees. After a long struggle, she was back in the seat. When she turned from him and leaned back, he understood what she had done.

Something sharp was biting into his wrists, something sharp held in Sylvia's hands. A thrill of hope went over Joe like a shock of electricity. He realized that she had picked up a piece of the shattered window from the car floor, and was holding it as a knife. If he could cut those cords on his wrists, he could get at the driver, by surprise.

Yet he had no illusions about the driver; he knew the man was armed, was deadly. Being discovered in this effort would bring instant destruction; but being discovered was a risk he must take. He turned with the utmost difficulty and bent his body forward, bringing his bound wrists up as high as possible over the small of his back, so that Sylvia, with the piece of glass, could saw at the cords.

Haste was paramount, now. Within ten minutes, the driver of the car would be joined at the outskirts of Atlanta by two other men, and after that, there would be no hope whatever. Joe Marvin knew he would need luck, to succeed in the attack on this one man. But he had to succeed: Sylvia's life might depend on it; his own life most certainly did. He tried to move his wrists, to help the jagged glass cut the cords. The irregular jolting of the car threw him off balance, but he braced himself with his knees. Now that he had hope, each passing minute was sheer agony.

The car purred through the suburban section, gathering speed. But the driver was taking no chances of being conspicuous with haste, so he still stayed in the line of thick traffic. He didn't look back, although Joe knew he would look back, at the next red light. They must be finished with this, by then.

The traffic light ahead glowed amber; it flared red just as they reached it. Rapid deceleration almost threw Joe to the floor. He could see the driver relaxing as the car stopped, relaxing and turning his head. And, desperate, Joe leaned back with his full weight, catching Sylvia's shoulder and pinioning her against the cushion. The splinter of glass stabbed cruelly into his wrist.

For ten seconds he held his breath while he felt the driver's queer luminous eyes searching the rear of the car with an infinite silent suspicion. Sylvia's head was resting on his shoulder in a strained, unnatural way that must appear noticeable. But the traffic bell clanged, and the driver swung back to his task without saying a word.

Instantly, with a reckless, desperate haste, Joe leaned forward again. The jagged glass sawed at the cord. He could hear Sylvia's quickened, excited breathing as she fought at the half dozen tough strands. It seemed to Joe that they would not possibly have time. The driver was spurring the car now; they were on the outskirts of town.

SITTING there, counting the minutes and planning desperately what he would do, Joe Marvin tried to compose himself. He could not fully realize even yet that all this was an actuality and not a bad dream. Of course, he knew that Dan Paulling had received the two letters demanding money, under a threat of Sylvia's abduction. For days Sylvia had been a virtual prisoner in her own house. And tonight she had struck on the bold, incredibly foolish game of trying to steal out past the guards and go to the Riding Club dance. When Joe got to the Paulling house, expecting an evening of bridge, she was dressed just as she was dressed now, in a pale blue frock that was cut low in the back and clung alluringly to her slim figure.

It seemed impossible, as Joe thought back over it, that he could have assented to her idiotic proposal. But he had, and they had slipped past the guard who these days was constantly on duty in the side drive; they had gone swiftly and unobserved, so they thought, along Pace's Ferry Road, in the rain, laughing and thinking it a great joke on Sylvia's father, youthfully stirred with their exciting audacity. And before they had ever reached the Riding Club, it had happened.

THREE men who had been driving a small roadster passed them, and as they passed, skidded on the wet pavement. Their fender crushed into Joe's, and both cars slewed toward the curb. A low branch of a tree shattered the glass of a rear window of Joe's car. The road was isolated in this exclusive section of town, and, here, traffic was light. No other cars were in sight, and there was no escape, for the small car blocked the way. The next thing Joe knew, a man was on the running-board, gun in hand. A soft voice filled with a swift, slashing sibilance said:

"Climb over into the back seat—don't open the door!"

Joe hesitated. Then he challenged, "What's the idea?"

The man's spaced words carried a deadly ruthlessness: "I said, get into the back seat!" The gun was incredibly steady. It fascinated Joe more than the man's face, which he could not see very clearly. He didn't move fast enough, and the gun darted out and then he felt a sickening pain on the side of his head. Pain flowed all over his body, numbing his senses. He heard Sylvia's one stifled scream. But, though he tried to struggle back to consciousness, to do something about it, he didn't seem able to move....

Later, he was vaguely conscious of being in the back seat, and he knew he was gagged and bound hand and foot, and the lone driver up there at the wheel was taking them steadily through traffic with a silent assurance. Joe looked at Sylvia; she too was bound and gagged.

For some time the car whined over the wet streets. Joe huddled there. His head throbbed. He saw the driver turn and look deeply into the curtained enclosure. Presently they stopped at a side street, and a man who apparently had been waiting there, said in a hoarse, barely audible whisper:

"Okay?"

"Okay," the driver returned hastily. "Where'll I trade cars with you and Dorn?"

"Stewart Avenue at Virginia—Hapeville. I'll ditch this car. What we gonna do with the guy?"

The man's spaced words carried a deadly ruthlessness: "I said, get into the back seat!"

"Let Dorn decide that," the driver said, shrugging. "You take him. I'm goin' back like we planned, for the dough. You're gonna meet Dorn and go inside to the Old Man's place in the swamp?"

"Yeah. I'll swap license plates and leave this hack in Waycross." After an instant's pause, he added, "Dorn don't like it, our snatching somebody along with the doll. Did he get a good look at us?"

"Yeah—he couldn't help gettin' a good look at us."

There was subdued violence in the other voice. "Then we'll sneeze him and dump him in the swamp as we go in. But anyhow, we got the doll. See you in ten minutes. You be there!"

The car rolled again. Joe Marvin sat straighter in his seat, and tried to suck a full breath into his lungs. He was trembling. There was no use kidding himself. He and Sylvia were in a bad situation.

He twisted his hands, straining at the cords on his wrists. But the struggle was futile; the cords only cut deeper into his flesh. Then Sylvia discovered that sharp piece of glass. . . .

They were on Stewart Avenue now, the tires singing on the slick pavement as the car rushed through the night. Joe could feel Sylvia's hurried gasps as she fought for breath. They would reach Virginia Avenue in half a dozen minutes, at this rate of speed.

Just then, his hands came free. He rubbed his wrists feverishly, getting the circulation started again. He lifted Sylvia back where she had sat before. Keeping sharp watch on the driver, he removed both the gags. Then he untied his ankles, working with a tense haste, planning. They were topping a rise now, and on the next rise, a mile away, was the intersection where this driver was to be relieved. Joe wanted to release Sylvia, but he didn't have time.

He had no sort of weapon. In the darkness he took off his shoe. With a quick movement he half stood and struck at the driver's head. At the same time he started to climb over and get at the steering-wheel, so he could stop the car and could keep it from swerving.

At the first blow, the driver ducked and reached for his gun, snarling an oath. Joe could see his face in the lights of an oncoming car. His face had a desperate canine look, thin lips drawn tight over his teeth. Joe slugged with the shoe. For an instant he thought they were going to collide head-on with the passing car, and then, when that danger was past, he wished they could have collided. For the driver had that black automatic in his hand, and was trying to jam the muzzle into Joe's face.

JOE dropped the shoe and grabbed at the other's wrist with both hands. In a silent frenzy they fought for the gun. The car careened down the highway, swinging gradually to the left. Joe took one hand off the driver's wrist and threw a wild punch at his chin. The driver grunted. His breath was a hot blast. He panted, "This time I'll give you the works!"

After that, Joe didn't know quite what happened. The gun vomited fire in his eyes, blinding him. It was as if he had looked directly into the sun for a moment; he couldn't see anything else. The driver was behind the blind spot, and Joe had a desperate grip on his wrist, and had a hold on the wheel, but he couldn't see anything. The gun went off again.

He felt the car crash into the embankment at the left side of the road. It lurched up and careened and swerved down again, at high speed. The body

twisted. When it twisted, the right front door came open. The gun blasted the third time, and burning powder stung Joe's cheeks until he was in a frenzy of pain. Involuntarily, he let go of the driver. And the driver, who was a small, agile man, whirled and got one foot in the pit of Joe's stomach and shoved. The next thing Joe knew, he was out of the car, falling.

IT seemed to him he fell fifty feet, but of course it wasn't that far. He struck the wet pavement with a nauseating impact, on his left shoulder. He rolled over and over. His body felt as though every bone in it were broken, when he finally lay still. He raised himself to his hands and knees, in the mud, in the steady cold rain. The car was whining over the hill.

Joe struggled to his feet and ran after the car. In bleak despair, he ran some twenty paces before he thought to halt. He was sobbing with rage and frustration. His fear for Sylvia was a live, frightful thing. Standing there in the darkness, his clothing torn half off his body, he tried to think what to do.

The savage resolution to track down the kidnapers burned in his brain. For a few moments it blinded him to everything else. Then he realized the futility of trying to do that immediately. The first thing was to get word to Dan Paulling, Sylvia's father. Sylvia would be missed, by this time; she hadn't gone out of the house for so long. It was odd that they hadn't thought of that, when they decided to spend the evening out, at the dance. It filled him with a goading humiliation to think of having accepted a part in such an idiotic, such a childish escapade as this was to have been. He loathed himself, hurrying back down the road to a telephone.

A motorist picked him up, finally, and let him out at a filling-station. With fingers that shook, he dialed the Paulling residence. A maid answered the phone. He controlled his voice with a vast effort, and said, "This is Joe Marvin. I want to speak with Mr. Paulling."

He waited, swallowing with a dry throat. As he stood there he knew he would have been glad to die, if only that would have put Sylvia back safe in her home. Dan Paulling's genially gruff voice came over the wire:

"Yes, Joe. What is it? I thought you were planning to spend the evening out here. Sylvia—"

Joe had tried to plan what to say. But he only blurted, "Mr. Paulling, they've got Sylvia! They've got her! We went out together, in the car, and they got her!" His voice broke. He quit trying to talk and stood there running his muddy fingers through his hair in distraction.

There was a long pause. He could hear Mr. Paulling suck in a quick breath, and there was another pause and finally the gruff voice was grating and incisive. "Who? Did you see them?"

"I don't know. Three men, but I only saw one of them closely. They got my car—and Sylvia's in it. They drove south."

"Are you all right?"

"Yes. I'm at a filling-station on Stewart Avenue. I tried to stop them. But—" His voice broke again, to a boyish falsetto. There was another moment of hushed waiting. Joe could hear his heart beating.

"Stay there," Dan Paulling ordered. "Don't say anything to anybody. Tell me how to get to you."

JOE gave directions. Then he went out and walked back and forth in the rain. At last Mr. Paulling drove up in the small car that Sylvia had always used. His square, leathery face was strangely blank of emotion, as if he were holding himself tight to keep from feeling anything. Joe couldn't keep his lips steady, facing Dan Paulling. He knew the full meaning of fright that comes from anxiety. It ripped through him, sucking away his vitality, turning him old. Dan Paulling said with a restrained harshness that was to Joe more censuring than any outburst of anger could ever have been: "Get in here. I never thought you'd let Sylvia get into this kind of a mess." He turned the car, his face set. "Now tell me about it."

Joe told about it, holding back nothing. He said: "Mr. Paulling, I was a fool. I should have stopped Sylvia. I'm sorry I didn't—I can't tell you how sorry I am. If we don't get her back, why—why, I'll never get over it—"

"We won't get her back being sorry about it," Dan Paulling grated, his wide mouth very grim. "You made a mistake and we've got to undo it—if we can. Do you have any idea where they were planning to hide her?"

Joe recalled for the first time that terse whispered conversation at the side of the car. He exclaimed, "They're going to

that big swamp near Waycross—they thought I was knocked out, but I heard one of them say something about going into the swamp, and leaving my car at Waycross with new license tags."

"The Okefenokee," Dan Paulling said. "I've been hunting there. If they get her into that swamp, we'll never get to her—we'll have to wait until they communicate with us—we'll have to buy her back. Everybody thinks I'm a rich man, but I'm not very rich. I may not be able to get enough money to buy her back." He opened the car door with a savage vigor and leaped out. He crossed to the filling-station and dialed a number, the sheriff of Fulton County. When nobody answered, he jiggled the hook with a dark impatience and dialed again, then began speaking immediately. He didn't sound excited, but every word came out of his mouth with a violent impact. "Bill? This is Dan. They've got my girl—they've got Sylvia, after all. . . . Just a while ago. I want you to block every road between here and Waycross. We think they're taking her that way. But don't do anything that will make them hurt her! You'll have your boys take care of that? When you can, come out to the house." He hurried back to the car and got in. "Now," he said to Joe, "the only thing we can do is go home and wait and try not to worry." The wheels spewed gravel as he let out the clutch.

The wind was rising and it was growing steadily colder. The thought came to Joe that if no trace of Sylvia's kidnapers was discovered, tomorrow he could take his plane and fly over the swamp, looking. He must do something! What he would do, even if he found the shack in the swamp, he didn't know.

THROUGH an interminable night, Joe waited with Dan Paulling and a small group of confidants in the Paulling living-room, expecting, hoping desperately, that the kidnapers would be picked up before they reached the swamp. Joe wrote a description of the roadster the three men had used, and of the one man he had seen clearly enough to recognize again. Dawn came, and there was still no word from the smaller towns where the kidnapers had been expected to appear. Night wore into raw, cold dawn.

And morning brought developments. A muffled voice on the telephone informed Dan Paulling: "Put a hundred grand in small used bills in an old suitcase and meet me at the southwest corner of Grant Park at eight o'clock tonight—alone. Don't try to put the finger on me. If anything happens to me, you'll never see the girl." The speaker gave no time for questions. They couldn't trace the call.

That night Dan Paulling took a hundred thousand dollars to the place, as told, and waited through four dreadful hours. . . . No one came.

SO the second awful night wore on. The rain and low clouds held. With every hour, Dan Paulling's face grew more deeply lined. Joe Marvin walked the floor and smoked cigarettes. When daylight came, utterly cheerless, he drove swiftly toward the flying-field.

He kept his Lockheed Altair in Barry Johnson's hangar, and an hour after daylight he was in the cockpit, on the ramp, waiting for the barking engine to warm up enough to fly. Beads of rain whipped off the windshield and slowly drenched the shoulders of his flying-suit. Before he had been off the ground an hour, he'd be soaked, he knew. Yet there were compensations, too: today, flying near the earth, he could see a great deal without being himself seen, although, of course, the engine's noise would drift far across the swamp.

He knew that the chance of finding the right trapper's shack was remote. Yet he might find it, and if he found it, he would do what seemed best at the time—crack up there, and put up the best battle possible, or fly to the nearest town and get guides and a posse to go back with him by boat. The latter course depended on his marking the location well enough to find again. Thoughtfully he fingered his father's .45 as he considered what might happen, and then thrust it in the side pocket of the cockpit.

He took off presently, motor roaring, red mud splashing as he hit the wet spots in the field. The plane rolled a long way, for he had as much gas in the tanks as they would hold. The tendrils of the clouds were almost in the trees, in places, in the first few miles of flight. Joe stayed beneath them, holding to a compass course.

After a few minutes more than an hour, hurtling down toward the Atlantic seaboard, he found Waycross. Here he turned a little to the right and started searching, flying a hundred feet above the mess of vegetation and black water. He had not deceived himself about the

extent of his task. The swamp was vast. He had divided his map into red-penciled grids, each one ten miles on a side; and now he started scouring across them.

It was wearing work. He had the constant mental hazard of the possibility of motor failure. He remembered a story of a pilot, forced down here, who had struggled futilely through waist-deep muck for days, only to die of exhaustion and the murderous attacks of insects. The air was rough, and the bumps slammed Joe constantly into his belt or down into his seat, battering his spine. His head ached from eyestrain, and his ears throbbed with the drumming of the motor. And after hours, he had seen no building in the swamp.

There were plenty of hummocks of dry land where shacks could have been built. He passed a dozen islands, barren for the most part but for swamp grass and sparse timber. On one such place he found an old, abandoned camp, the ashes of the fires black with age. As he moved farther from the outer perimeter of the swamp the country became wilder, and wild fowl rose in frenzied confusion as he passed. Here long lanes of deep water separated the shallow pools that had become a filthy green with decaying vegetation. He saw black bear and deer, as well as smaller animals; in a basin of smooth water an alligator progressed sluggishly, appearing to push a great V-shaped ripple forward with its nose.

BY mid-morning he had covered the north end of the swamp. He had found one shack, too old and dilapidated to house any living soul. Beyond that, there had been nothing—and his gas was getting low and he must be going on to Jacksonville for more. He was losing hope.

And then, on a low, narrow hummock that was brownish green with swamp grass, he saw a cabin partially concealed behind some pines.

In sharp excitement, he turned enough to keep the nose from blocking his vision. Focusing his binoculars with trembling fingers, he saw enough to give substance to wild hope. The shack was almost hidden in the trees, and the swamp grass was high on the west side of the hummock where a few planks and stakes improvised a landing. At this landing, drawn up in the grass almost out of sight, Joe saw a dugout. From this boat to the shack was a fresh-trampled path.

His heart was pounding, as he tabulated evidence. There was a faint wisp of smoke trailing from the sheet-iron stack at the north end of the cabin. A pile of refuse lay near by. Joe eased the plane into a shallow dive, and it swept past with incredible rapidity, clearing the low eave by scarcely fifty feet.

AS it did, a girl's figure appeared suddenly in the doorway, one slim arm lifted to attract attention —a pale-faced girl dressed in a blue evening gown that was as incongruous in that setting as the girl herself. And instantly a man appeared beside her and snatched her violently from view.

A kind of dread excitement foamed over Joe in waves. He had been so sure until this moment that he would land on the hummock and go to Sylvia's assistance, once he found her. He wanted to do that, but now recognized the folly of it. If he flew straight on out of sight, the kidnapers might assume that he was a transient flyer, lost in weather—and would not suspect that their hideout had been found. But Sylvia, having recognized his plane, would be heartened by the knowledge that he would soon return with aid. So, he reasoned, he must go on, to Jacksonville, and call Dan Paulling on the telephone.

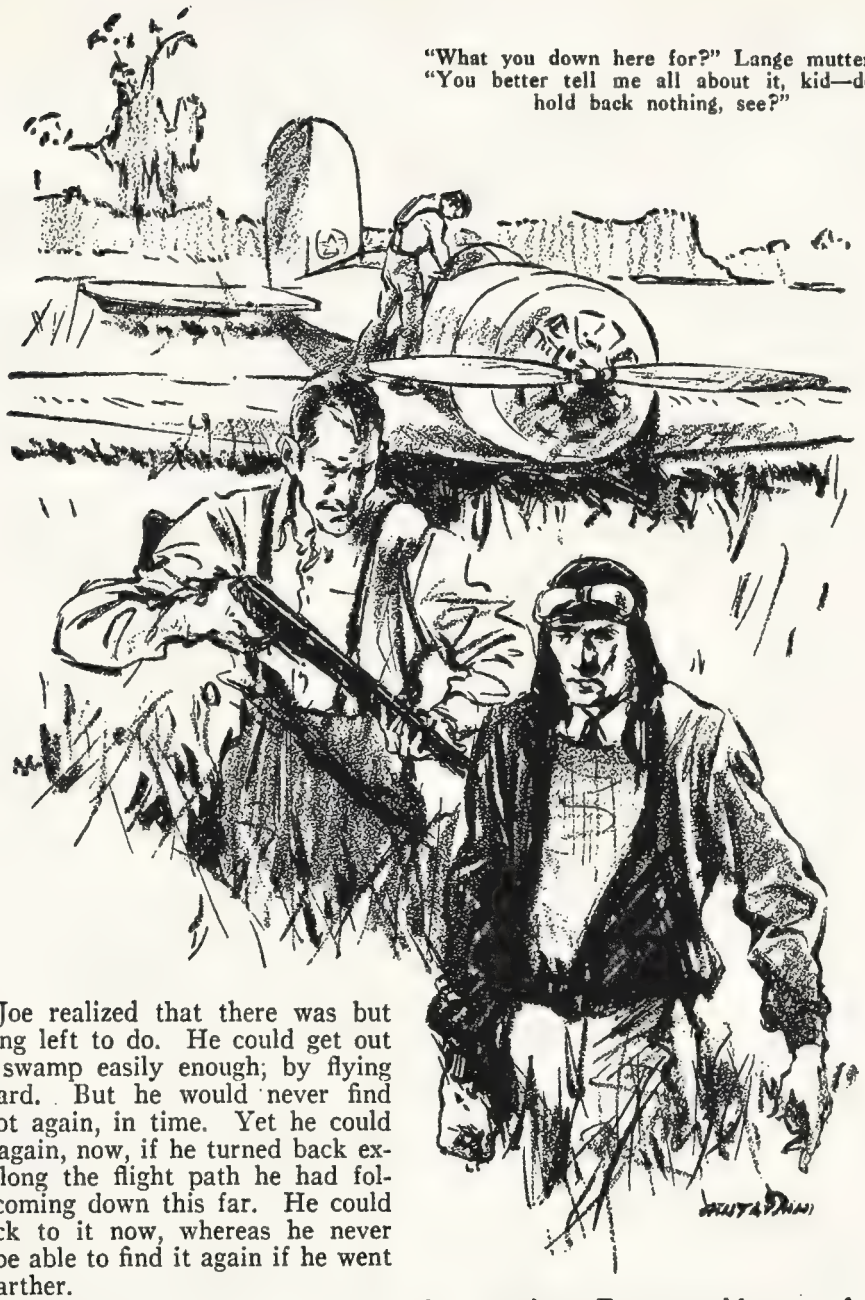
Looking back across the tail, he fixed that scene in memory. The hummock was in no great way different from most ridges of muck and earth in the deep swamp. Its width was perhaps a hundred yards, its length a half a mile. There were few trees, and all of them were concentrated in a grove in which the shack was snuggled. The remainder of the hummock was completely overgrown with grass.

As Joe saw all this again, the plane was hurtling through misty air at two hundred feet a second. He got only a glimpse, and already the island, merging with the murk behind, had taken on the sameness of a thousand similar places.

He snatched up his grid map, to mark the location there. And he discovered in a thin dismay that he wasn't sure enough of his location now to make the mark.

Swiftly, he circled to the right. With narrowed glances, he tried to match the points of reference in the swamp to the grid marks and the map. He couldn't do it. He wheeled there in a taut haste, desperate, but it wasn't any use.

The swamp reached out on every side, merging with the mist and clouds. Trem-



"What you down here for?" Lange muttered. "You better tell me all about it, kid—don't hold back nothing, see?"

bling, Joe realized that there was but one thing left to do. He could get out of the swamp easily enough; by flying southward. But he would never find this spot again, in time. Yet he could find it again, now, if he turned back exactly along the flight path he had followed coming down this far. He could get back to it now, whereas he never would be able to find it again if he went much farther.

With a resolute recklessness, he turned the Lockheed back.

What he meant to do when he did get back, he tried to decide quickly. Of course, barring a miracle, he was going to have to crash the plane. There was danger enough in that, but it was not now his great concern. He wasn't sure that by going back he'd be helping Sylvia —for single-handed, he could not hope to cope with both her kidnapers, even if he survived the crash unhurt, even if they did not recognize him as Sylvia's escort and he had a chance to take them by surprise. Force would prove futile in what he had to do; so he must abandon thoughts of force and resort to strategy. It would be best to appear unarmed; he left the .45 there in its pocket. It would appear better if he seemed hopelessly lost; doggedly he held his maps out in the propeller blast.

Through the mist ahead he caught sight of the shack again. With a smooth coördinated haste he put the wheels down, tightened his belt, raised his goggles and cut off the gas, sliding down into his glide.

He leveled off. Head out in the blast, he could not see clearly the two men who had come running from the shack. But what he did see clearly was that suddenly his windshield starred before his face, and a small round hole appeared.

Wildly startled, he gunned the motor, meaning to climb back into the clouds. But even as he slapped the throttle open, the engine starved out and the muttering exhaust became a hollow pulsing whistle as the propeller windmilled. The plane mushed heavily; without the thrust of the motor to hold its speed it pancaked—hard.

There was a dull crunching of wheel struts, and the hiss of swamp grass being mowed down. Joe hauled the stick back in his stomach and tried to brace himself to take the blow. He fought to keep the tail down, but it came up despite the taut controls.

Then, for a reason he never understood, the plane hit solid ground and decelerated evenly and the tail came down again. It thumped into the grass, and after ten feet more of roll, the Lockheed halted, the propeller exactly horizontal.

Reaction came over Joe in little spurts. He remembered to breathe, and his diaphragm was a dull ache that slowly dissipated. He stood up in the cockpit, waving at the men to let them know he wasn't armed. For they were approaching, eyes narrowed in a cold estimate.

He said, voice unsteady in spite of his effort at an urbane nonchalance, "Hello! Had a forced landing! Got myself lost, and just about ran out of gas."

THE two stopped ten yards away, their rifles in a ready position in the crooks of their arms, their faces mirroring murderous suspicion but no trace of recognition. One was tall, with a thin face and shrewd blue eyes. The other was of shorter build, with a mouth that had no visible lips, a straight slash in a reckless countenance.

"Climb out of there, you," said this latter one. He lurched forward through the swamp grass with a quick, nervous stride, gun ready. "Lange, you take him to the shack. I'm going to have a look around his plane."

The man called Lange came up more slowly, a definite caution in the smooth looseness of his movements. He said: "Why take him there, Dorn? Don't assume things till you find them out. . . . Stranger, what's your business here?"

Joe Marvin, outwardly completely calm, swung his legs to the fuselage steps, never taking eyes from Lange. Estimating both men in swift, fragmentary appraisals, he decided that Dorn was in command. Joe said:

"When you run out of gas in one of these chariots, you've got to come down. I saw your place, so I came back to it. I'm in the swamp somewhere, I know, but I'm about as lost as I ever want to be. How far is Jacksonville?"

DORN took a step forward with casual ease. "Get down," he said. Infinite suspicion shone from his cold gray eyes. "You're in the middle of the swamp. Don't you know what that means?"

With a forced indifference, Joe returned, "It means I'm going to have a hell of a long trip back to anywhere, I guess."

Lange said with a quietness that made Joe shiver, "We wouldn't try to tell you different, son."

Joe tried to laugh. It was without humor, a flat cackling sound. He stood there a moment longer, trying to marshal some cogency to thought. The wind was whispering around his head, as he clung to the fuselage, helmet in hand. A thin drizzle fell from leaden clouds, soothing the fire of his cheeks with its clammy dampness. From this position, a few feet above the level of the swamp, the shack hidden in the scrawny pines could not be seen. Swamp grass was a brown waste across the hummock. To the east, a lane of black water blended without life or motion to the green scum of a shallow pond, and beyond that, a quarter of a mile away, gaunt cypress merged vaguely with the grayness of the day, Spanish moss draped dismally from every branch.

"You're having tough weather for a fishing trip," Joe said with elaborate courtesy, looking directly at Dorn. He stepped down, into the wet depth of the dead grass. With these men he must affect curiosity without inquisitiveness. He had no illusions about what they intended. He glanced for an instant at the windshield of the plane. "Or perhaps I'm mistaken about this being a fishing expedition," he added, dryly agreeable. "But I'm not a G-man looking for stills, so there's no occasion either for the guns now, or for the shot you took at me as I came in to land." He tried to read their suspicious, predatory faces, but was unable to. "At any rate, I'm cold and I'm getting wet, and I'm hungry. Must we keep on standing here?"

"What's your name?" Dorn growled. "You're free and easy with the gab."

Joe told him coolly, watching the shifting gleam in Dorn's small eyes. The man's face showed nothing. Lange, his clothes becoming damp, said impatiently, "Come on, son. Dorn, you look at that airplane if you want, but I'm going back. This here's a problem we hadn't counted on." He shifted his rifle to the crook of his arm again, the muzzle at Joe's loin, moving with that same loose-muscled, easy caution. Dorn turned away, circling the plane, cursing the wet, leg-entangling grass.

Leaving Dorn there, they threshed through grass toward the cabin. The earth was a hard peat-like muck, fairly dry under the superficial wetting of this drizzling rain. But for the grass, Joe thought, he might be able to take off in the Lockheed once more—if he could contrive the chance.

FEELING the impersonal watchfulness of Lange's eyes upon his back, Joe said with derision, "You and Dorn are impressive—guns and mystery and all. Am I a dangerous character, or is this that kind of country?"

"What you down here for?" Lange muttered, his legs scissoring audibly. "Me, I aim to live and let live—but Dorn, he's a hard one. He'd 'a' put a hole in you. You better tell me all about it, kid—don't hold back nothing, see?"

"I told you," Joe said, outwardly without mistrust. He wanted to turn and study Lange's thin features, but he didn't dare. "I ran out of gas, or was just about to run out. I was lost. This is a big swamp, and I knew if I cracked up away from help, I'd probably never get out alive—so I came back to the last place I'd seen that looked like people lived there. Isn't that simple enough?"

"Maybe so for me," said Lange. "But Dorn—I aint saying what Dorn's going to do."

They walked on, the whisking of their trousers in the grass the only sounds, except when Lange grunted a direction to turn right or left. As yet, although Joe knew it could not be far ahead, he had caught no glimpse of the cabin, from the ground. The cunning of its concealment explained, probably, why no one had discovered it before.

"Head around them palmettos," Lange ordered curtly.

Beyond the palmettos, Joe caught sight of the shack. Pines shadowed it, to which it matched its chameleon gray-brown, taking no definite shape because the tree-trunks supplied a natural camouflage. But as he drew nearer, Joe searched out its details. It was built of logs and shingled with shakes. There was a porch that faced the east, unscreened against mosquitoes. It was surprising how obscure and small it had looked from the air.

They came to the porch. No one was in sight, behind the doorway. Joe stopped now, his pulse unsteady at the thought of facing Sylvia. Behind him, Lange called out in a voice not loud but penetrating, "John!"

After a momentary interval of silence, a figure deepened the gloom of the doorway, and emerged upon the porch. This man was heavy through the chest, with incredibly broad shoulders about which a faded hunting-coat fitted loosely. Age lay in loose wrinkles on his cheeks, puckering his eyes, which were deep blue and almost serenely still. He must have been seventy, Joe thought, yet he moved across the porch with a compact ease.

"How's the girl?" Lange spoke with a blunt violence that carried an impact. Joe half turned, involuntarily, and caught Lange's shrewd eyes fastened on his face.

It seemed to him that he could not wait for John's slow answer. Dread thoughts ripped at his poise, but he assumed that same derisive smile and held his tongue, as Lange's eyes searched out his features carefully.

"Still here," John said laconically. He thrust open the door and held it with resigned indifference. Stepping up onto the porch, Joe sensed a submerged yet watchful hostility between these men. The old man had a wary submissiveness which at the same time seemed to hold a stubborn disapproval.

"Come into the shack, kid," Lange said with a soft, ominous tone. "I want to talk to you. . . . John, you got coffee and anything to eat?"

"Coffee," John returned equably, following them into the main room of the cabin. "I can fry ye up some eggs."

Lange cursed. "Eggs and fish! Is that all the food you ever knew? Well, hurry up with it. Dorn will be here pretty soon."

JOHN moved in silent thoughtfulness into the hallway. Joe looked about the room, finding it amazing. There was a radio on a table by the east win-

In the doorway appeared suddenly a girl, dressed in an evening gown—as incongruous in that setting as the girl herself.

dow; on the floor, a grass rug gave a look of permanence; pictures on the walls were of varied types, from an etching of a fog-bound schooner on a windless sea to a pen-and-ink sketch of a famous comic strip character, autographed by its creator. This background for men like Lange and Dorn seemed utterly incongruous. But the comic strip, Joe saw a moment later, was autographed to "John."

Sitting there, Joe tried to understand John's true place in this crime. The old man looked like a swamp trapper or a prosperous guide. Why was he harboring Lange and Dorn, and furnishing his place as a hide-out for kidnapers? It seemed unreasonable.

Lange sat down by the radio, tamped a cigarette and held a match to it. Behind the cloud of smoke, his voice was casual: "What's the news outside, kid?"

Joe spurned the bait. "What do you mean—the news outside? Don't you get outside, yourself? You don't look like a native trapper."

"All the news we get is through the radio—and that aint much. I like to hear what's going on, when I'm down here fishing. What's happened—in Atlanta?"

Joe tried to analyze the motive for that question, fitting it into the facts he knew. Then he had it! If the ransom had been paid, wouldn't he say so, if Lange could draw him out enough for him to mention the kidnaping? It had not been put on the air. He said vaguely, "I'm out of Atlanta most of the time—flying. Nothing happening, that I know of."

HE could sense the dissatisfaction in Lange's manner, but the man said no more. Old John came in silently and put dishes on the rough-hewn table at the south end of the living-room. He moved with a massive smoothness that denied his age, his hands sure in their work, his eyes lifting with occasional fleeting direct glances at Lange. Then he said in that equable soft drawl, "Hit aint much, but if ye be hongry, come an' set."

They sat down in bent-wood chairs to a lunch of fried eggs and hard toast, fried black bass, fried potatoes, coffee. Lange, eating sullenly, remarked to John: "If I'd throw away that skillet of yours, we'd sure starve!" He turned on Joe Marvin with a swift intensity. "Listen," he said, jabbing with his fork for emphasis. "When the weather gets better, can you take off again in that plane of yours, from where it is?"

Wondering what was in Lange's mind, Joe waited while he boned a fish. Then he said evenly, "I told you, I landed because I was almost out of gas."

"I mean," Lange said with his mouth full, "if you had more gas."

"That depends on the load I'd have to carry."

"Two people—three people—me and Dorn and a—another party."

JOE realized that the other "party" must be Sylvia. He probably could not take the plane off, through that swamp grass, by itself; he'd never get it off the ground with three people in its large front cockpit. But the suggestion was a spark that fired his brain to a more plausible idea—the only one, so far, which seemed to hold any real promise of success. Perhaps he could get Dorn and Lange and John to help him clear a runway for the take-off, and then, if his luck held, he might contrive to get Sylvia alone in the plane, perhaps at night. There was a full moon, now.

The idea burned into his mind. Of course, the obstacles were vast, and the danger could not be underestimated. Yet he knew the infinite peril Sylvia and he were in already, and such a bold move would not increase their danger much.

Keeping all trace of excitement, even of interest, from his tone, he said, "With gasoline, I might be able to. But there's going to be a lot to do. I'll have to check the runway, and we'll have to clear it enough to let the plane get speed. After that's done, we'll see how much gasoline we can take aboard and still get off. It will be a risk, in any case."

As he ceased speaking, the screen door slammed and Dorn stalked into the room with heavy tread. The thin scar of his mouth was lifted at one corner in a sardonic twitching smile; his gray eyes were brightly cold as he tossed Joe's .45 down upon the table with a crash.

"Just a schoolboy lost in the swamp, eh?" His deep voice was coarse with a stinging mockery. He sat down opposite Joe, and his nervous fingers took up the weapon once more. Muzzle aimed directly at Joe's throat, he toyed with it, thumbing the hammer back and letting it slip forward. "You better talk fast," he rasped.

Joe felt his cheeks go numb. "Not quite a schoolboy," he said with a forced painful leisure. "I always carry the gun. In case of fire—in case I have a forced landing—"

"Smart guy," Dorn grunted. He turned icy gray eyes on old John, then seemed to reconsider what he was about to say. Scraping back his chair, he stalked down the hallway toward the kitchen, the gun still in his hand.

In the hushed tension of that room, Joe searched Lange's strict face for a sign of what might come, but found no clue. Old John sat at his place, furtively watchful, fork poised, absolutely motionless. From the rear of the cabin Dorn's rude voice sounded in an undertone, and then irregular footsteps retraced their way along the hall—two people, coming quickly.

Still wearing that long evening gown, Sylvia came into the room a moment later, her presence adding volatility to an atmosphere already explosive. Fright was in her wide blue eyes. From the rigidity of her laced fingers, Joe Marvin understood the violence of the strain she had been undergoing. Yet to Lange and Dorn she must have seemed sufficiently poised, a tall, proud, silent girl.

She undoubtedly knew Joe had come back and landed. The motor's noise must have reached this cabin in the pines, so she was prepared to see him. Yet as their eyes met, he saw the involuntary interruption of the posed serenity of her entrance. Shock showed in the delicate flaring of her nostrils; her eyes widened almost imperceptibly and her lips parted with a quick breath that was checked in its beginning.

It was so imperative that she show no sign of recognition! Looking at her with an impersonal blankness, yet trying to bridge space with reassuring thought, Joe saw her pull herself back to a spuriously disinterested composure. She came in and took a seat at the table end.

Dorn sat down.

"You two don't know each other?" Dorn inquired with feigned affability. "Both being from Atlanta—" His frigid eyes traveled over Sylvia's face with a speculative patience, then swung to Joe. "Miss—Jackson, this is Mr. Marvin. He was flying over and decided to—drop in."

Lange chuckled harshly, in his throat. Old John got up and moved placidly into the kitchen.

"Charmed," Joe murmured, feeling the pressure of Dorn's suspicion.

"How do you do?" Sylvia returned, and lowered her eyes.

SILENCE fell distrustfully upon the group. Joe lifted a glass of water to his lips, and knew his hand was trembling visibly. But nobody seemed to notice him now. Old John came back with hot biscuits and wild honey. Audibly, rain dripped from the eaves to the pools in the muck earth: the chilling north

wind whined over the chimney; billowing fog rolled across the swamp, obliterating the outlines of near-by cypress and pines. And as Dorn and Lange ate ravenously, Joe came to know that he was momentarily safe. Dorn was relaxing, secure in the belief that there was no connection between this kidnaped girl and the man who had come back to land.

With swift, reassuring glances at Sylvia, Joe made desperate plans. He could tramp down the grass enough to improvise some sort of runway, he believed. There was sufficient gasoline in the tanks of the Lockheed to reach Jacksonville, and even without more than enough gas to get out of the swamp, it would be better to get out, with Sylvia, and take a chance, than to stay here.

IF he merely waited for a chance to overpower Dorn and Lange and old John, it might require days, he considered with an harassed impatience. He had lost his only weapon. Recourse to rough-and-tumble fighting was impractical—impossible, in fact. He had never engaged in such a fight in all his life. Yet, thinking in a grim concentration on the matter, he knew he must do something, quickly. Tonight, probably, Dan Paulling would try again to make contact with the pay-off man. If he succeeded, then that individual would presumably come at once to this hide-out, or would communicate in some way, and it should follow that Sylvia would quickly be released.

But would she be? Joe, in a gathering distrust, did not believe she would. These men were completely ruthless. Dorn could not possibly have known who was in the plane a while ago—yet he had fired at the pilot with intent to kill. Lange—or at least a member of the band—had stood beside the car in Atlanta and coolly acknowledged the necessity for killing Joe because Joe had caught sight of the driver of the car. And Sylvia had seen the driver, and now knew Lange and Dorn as well. So her death would eliminate the risk of eventual recognition just as much as Joe's own would. The more Joe thought about it, the more convinced he was that not only he, but Sylvia as well, was marked for death the instant the ransom had been paid. He felt desperate, trapped, as he recognized the irrefutable logic of that reasoning.

Again, as he had done when he first came into the building, he searched the interior of the room. There was a sheet-iron wood stove in the north end, fire dying in it now. A stack of split pine lay beside it, the lengths perhaps fifteen or twenty inches long.

Joe settled back in his chair, apparently relaxing. All he wanted was a slim chance, and he suddenly thought he saw it.

"You look cold," he said to Sylvia, his voice sounding with a kindly but impersonal interest. "I'll shake up the fire."

Her lips trembled faintly as she looked at him. He thought he had never seen anyone look so tired—or so beautiful.

"I am—cold," she murmured. "Please do."

He wondered if she sensed what he meant to attempt.

Dorn said harshly, "John'll do the fire."

But Joe Marvin was already on his feet, moving without evident haste toward the low woodpile. He selected a pine stick a little larger than his wrist, and laid it to one side, upon the stack. With elaborate care he stoked the fire. Then, knowing full well that this was either death or freedom he was courting, he picked up the tough pine club, and, holding it casually, hidden by his right leg, he moved back toward the table.

Sylvia, facing the fire from the far end of the table, saw him coming, saw the stick, and sensed his intent. Her wan face froze, her eyes darkly alive with a bright dread. Dorn, seated at her left, had been beside Joe; Lange was across the table from Dorn, and old John was beside Lange.

DORN was the man Joe feared, and in removing Dorn, he hoped to get that .45 which was now resting in the leader's belt. Lange was dangerous enough, but Lange did not possess the killer's instinct Dorn so flauntingly displayed. Old John was an unknown in the equation, but the man was aged and apathetic enough to be slow in reaction to attack.

Joe almost reached a position behind Dorn, his motive undiscovered, when Lange yelled a raucous warning: "Dorn—behind you! Get that—"

Dorn turned at the moment Joe swung the club. It glanced off Dorn's skull with a dull *thluck*, striking downward to his shoulder. In the ensuing violence, Dorn rose from his chair, throwing the table forward, catching Lange and old John off their balance so that they fell backward in their chairs. Sylvia strug-

gled to her feet, her face clouded with shocked fear. She put up her hands as if to fend off the assailants, and stepped backward, screaming:

"Joe—the gun!"

Joe Marvin had no time to look to see the gun. He was battering at Dorn with short, chopping blows that had no perceptible effect. Dorn, off balance, had gone to the floor on hands and knees, and had started to come up again. All the time Joe struck at him. But Dorn's weaving form was difficult to hit, and no blow was a solid one.

THEN, as Dorn's head came up, the man's face dark with blood and a murderous hatred, Joe raised the club and smashed him hard on the temple. Dorn dropped like a pole-axed steer. And just then the gun behind Joe spoke thunderously across the room.

The spitting yellow burst of it was in Joe's eyes against the gloom of the cloudy afternoon. He felt no impact of the bullet, so he knew Lange must have missed. But no one could miss again, at such close range. Dropping flat, he took scanty shelter behind the upturned table, and tried to inch his way across the three feet of space that separated him from Dorn. Once he got that .45, he would cope with Lange.

Crawling there, he cursed his inability to accelerate his movements. He reached Dorn's side and tried to find the gun. But Dorn was lying on his face, the gun under him. His body had the limpness of a corpse; the shoulders turned without changing the position of the hips. Joe strained to turn Dorn over on his back. He couldn't do it. Holding Dorn's shoulder off the floor with one hand, he explored swiftly with the other.

All the time, spaced shots were crashing from across the room. Through Joe's desperate thoughts ran the incredulous realization that it was impossible for a man to miss as often as Lange had missed—and yet so far he was not hit. The detonations came irregularly, the gaps between them filled with Sylvia's warning screams. It all seemed unreal; but the pungent reek of burned powder, the impact of each explosion was real enough. Yet Joe felt no conscious fear. Excitement was in his veins like a vaporous fluid, volatile as ether, driving him on. He knew he must hurry, and he knew he had lost his chance to achieve what had been impossible all the time, but he was not afraid.

Tugging at Dorn's yielding body, he found the hard butt of the .45. He snatched it free, relief an actual physical sensation. Pivoting on his knees, he turned to fire a shot at Lange.

The gun came up in his hand with agonizing sluggishness. Visual impressions came across the room with an impacting force. He checked his tightening finger just in time—when he realized Sylvia was standing between himself and Lange. She was clawing at the man, while he tried both to fling her to one side and shoot at Joe. That explained why all of Lange's shots had been going so wild.

Crouching there under the scanty protection of the table, waiting to get in a shot without endangering Sylvia, Joe tried to locate old John. The white-haired man was nowhere to be seen, nor had he been in evidence since this mêlée started. Then Joe forgot him. Lange had cuffed Sylvia to one side with his elbow, and had taken snap-shot aim and fired. The bullet plucked at Joe's shoulder, just as he himself threw in a shot. He couldn't tell whether it was effective. Sylvia was back there, fighting, trying to hold Lange off. The moment Joe had waited for had come and passed.

He raised himself into a crouch, ready to leap across and engage the other hand-to-hand. He couldn't risk another shot, with Sylvia weaving in and out between himself and Lange. Tensing the muscles of his right leg, he came up gradually. Intent upon timing his attack, he did not see Dorn stir and open his eyes and estimate the situation in a swift survey. It puzzled him and enraged him when Lange threw down his gun and grabbed Sylvia by the shoulders and swung her into his line of fire. If he had looked behind him, he would have seen Dorn rising to his feet unsteadily, gun in hand, and he would have known that it was Dorn's fire Lange was trying to avoid, if Dorn missed Joe.

But as it was, through the smoke and dull light, Joe could not see the focus of Lange's eyes. And he never felt Dorn's blow at all, when the gun-butt crashed down upon his skull.

HE awoke with the pain of that blow still jerking at his nerves. His head felt bursting. A sweetish taste of powder lay deep in his throat when he swallowed, and there was a great roaring in his ears. Beyond the roaring, he could hear Dorn saying in an utterly relent-

less pronouncement, "Of course I'm going to rub the so-and-so out. Right now, by God! But I'm not going to do it here. He's going into the swamp. Where the hell is that old man? I need help, and you've got to stay with the moll. What time is it?"

"Twelve o'clock," said Lange. "Just about time for the news broadcast." He sounded excited, but underneath the excitement, he sounded upset. "Don't be a damn' fool, Dorn. You don't have to kill him—" He paused, interrupted by Sylvia's hysterical sobbing. Joe heard his heavy, spaced footsteps crossing the far side of the room, and his voice came again, more softly: "That won't do you no good. I'd untie you, sister, but you scratched my face."

"But let me see if he's hurt!" Sylvia sobbed, and her voice trailed away.

Dorn's steely cold voice grated, "Gag her, dammit! Do something to stop that sniveling."

Lange moved across the room and then back. "Take it easy, can't you, sister? Do you want a towel in your face?"

The sobbing ceased. Lange went on, to Dorn, "The thing to do is get out of here, with the dame. Leave this guy in the shack. He'll come around pretty soon. He'll have to walk out of the swamp, see—only he'll never get out. The airplane—somebody'll find it, and they'll think he landed at this shack and found nobody and tried to walk out. So we won't have that on us. But we got to move out o' here, quick—and a murder won't do any—"

"Why we got to move?" Dorn demanded sullenly.

"Because somebody'll be looking for this guy, when he doesn't show up in his

plane, see? But what I'm arguing is you're a fool to do murder when it aint necessary. When it's necessary—"

"You bucking me, Lange?" Dorn challenged with a deadly calm. "Am I running this snatch, and are you taking orders? We're gonna bump this guy, see?"

Silence slid over the room, heavy with irresolution. Joe Marvin opened his eyes, and found that he was lying by the upturned table on the floor. He could see Dorn from the spill of his vision. Dorn had a bloody handkerchief around his head, and was pacing back and forth between the hallway and the porch door. Lange was sitting by the radio now, his

thin face pinched with strain and indecision. Sylvia was out of sight, and Joe did not call attention to himself by turning his head.

The dry throbbing of that pain in his head sucked at his vitality, confusing thought. But he knew that he was trapped. There was no hope for him, no matter what they did with Sylvia. Dorn would brook no opposition from Lange, and Lange lacked the force of character to uphold his convictions.

Yet in the time still left to him, he searched for a means of frustrating Dorn. Given enough time, he might with patience gain some slim opportunity. But he knew that Dorn was going to act quickly. When that action came, the small furious burst of desperation left in Joe would avail nothing.

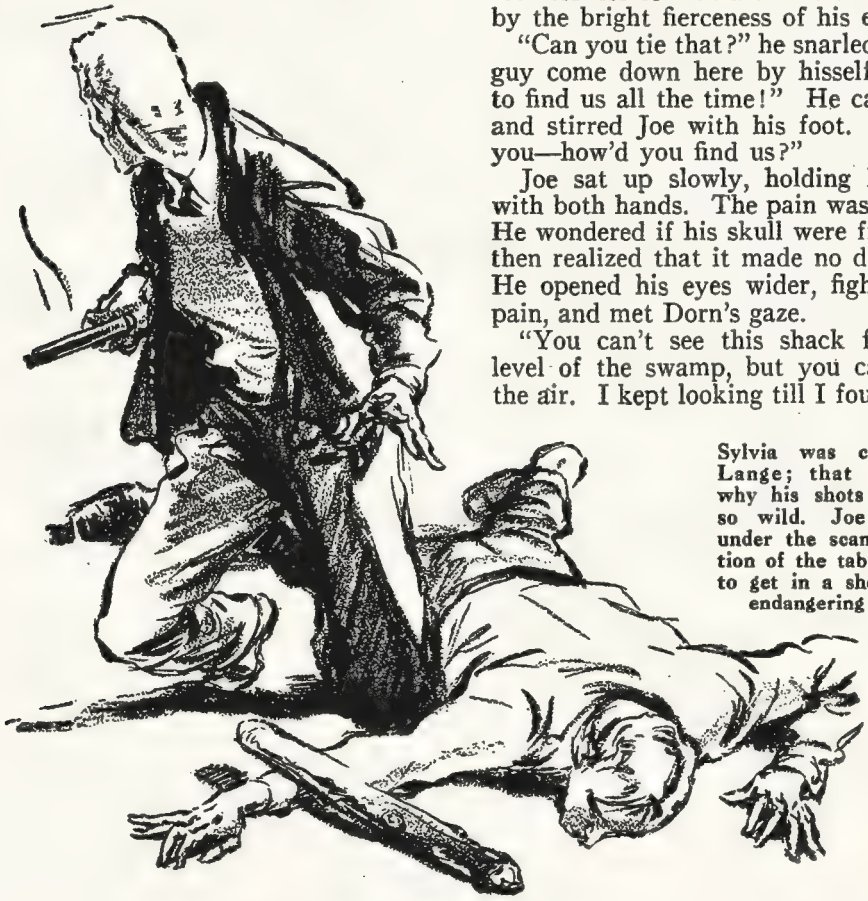
AT Lange's side, the radio erupted a slur of static, followed by a mellow gong, and then a sing-song voice that said, "WSB—the Atlanta *Journal*, Atlanta, Georgia. The *Journal* covers Dixie like the dew." The voice grew crisp and faintly nasal. *"News flashes of the day:* Sylvia Paulling, kidnaped daughter of Dan Paulling, Atlanta millionaire, has not been ransomed yet. The intermediary twice has failed to meet Paulling at the rendezvous to receive the money. Joe Marvin, friend of the family, took off this morning in his own plane in an effort to locate Sylvia in the depths of the Okefenokee Swamp, airport attachés have made known. He has been gone more than two hours beyond the limit of his fuel supply, and as yet is unreported. Fearing he is down in the swamp, searching parties are leaving Atlanta immediately by air to comb the area. The hide-out of the Ashley gang has never been located in the past, but this time it is going to be, officials promise. . . . *Flash!* Rome, Italy. . . . Italian legions are marching again today—" The radio went off abruptly as Lange turned the volume down.

Dorn had stopped at the doorway of the porch, his breathing audible in the intense quiet which had followed that announcement. He stared out across the dismal, mist-blurred swamp, and suddenly whirled back to Lange, the recklessness of his hard face exaggerated by the bright fierceness of his eyes.

"Can you tie that?" he snarled. "This guy come down here by hisself—meant to find us all the time!" He came over and stirred Joe with his foot. "Listen, you—how'd you find us?"

Joe sat up slowly, holding his head with both hands. The pain was terrible. He wondered if his skull were fractured, then realized that it made no difference. He opened his eyes wider, fighting the pain, and met Dorn's gaze.

"You can't see this shack from the level of the swamp, but you can, from the air. I kept looking till I found it."



Sylvia was clawing at Lange; that explained why his shots had gone so wild. Joe crouched under the scanty protection of the table, waiting to get in a shot without endangering Sylvia.

Dorn's square face took on an unaccustomed look of doubt. He stalked across the room. "You're right," he said violently to Lange. "They never found us before because they never hunted us with airplanes before. We'll have to move fast. But the punk—he stays right here." He stirred his big frame into a quick stride toward the hallway, calling, "John!" There was no answer.

Joe looked across at Sylvia, wrists and ankles bound with a light cord, sitting in a bent-wood chair beside the window. She looked badly frightened, yet underneath that was a deathless courage. He sent her a quick smile, across the room, and she tried bravely to smile back at him. He forced back a desperate temptation to launch a fresh attack on Lange. He must wait. . . . Painfully he got up and limped to a chair and sank into it.

FROM the rear of the shack, a door banged, shuffling feet came in, their sound mingled with the voluble abuse which Dorn was heaping on old John.

"The rat thought he'd grab the dugout and fix us so we couldn't get out o' the swamp," Dorn explained in a furiously sharp rage. He reached out and twisted the faded collar of John's hunting-coat tight around his wrinkled throat. "Damn you, I ought to throw your carcass to the alligators. Where's a good hide-out? We've got to scram—tonight—before night—now!"

Old John sat there as if numb, while fear stiffened his lips. "Hit don't make no difference about me," he mumbled. "What happened to my Ben?"

"Yeah!" sneered Lange. "What did happen to him? The radio just said he aint collected nothing yet. This guy Marvin found us with a airplane and there's others looking for him with airplanes—and they'll find him. So we gotta scram. We'll rub Ben out when we find him—that's what's going to happen to that rat."

Old John looked down at his gnarled hands, laced finger over finger in his lap. His face showed nothing. A minute passed. And then, slowly, he underwent a strange transition. Some violent imprisoned emotion set his lips to trembling. His voice took on a shrill hopeless desperation. "Hit aint like Ben," he protested. "Ye forged a killin' on him that he never done—ye forced me to harbor ye. I never had no trust for either of ye—and this's more'n I cain tolerate. I'm old. I been a honest trapper. Do what ye're a mind—but I be done with all o' ye!" His voice broke.

Dorn listened him out, and laughed with cold malice. "Ben's in with us," he said indifferently. "One word from us and Ben gets the hot-squat for this job. Old man, you'd better take us out o' here—and fast."

Old John only sat there apathetically, looking across the swamp. His mouth was pinched and bitter. Weariness lined his cheeks, turning them gray. But the resistance he had lacked before came now with sudden violence.

"Ye can murder me and murder Ben if ye're so minded—but I aint takin' ye nowhere," he said firmly.

Joe Marvin sensed the subtle change in Dorn and Lange, and that change made him think of something. They were city men, and without John's help they were trapped in this morass of wilderness. John knew the waterways and trails. So they could not destroy him without bringing almost certain destruction to themselves. Lange knew that, and Dorn must know it, too.

But the scheme Joe considered, as he sat there with his head throbbing from that pistol-blow, was the possibility of using his airplane as a weapon. The risk to himself would be tremendous. But it was a slim chance, and all he wanted was a slim chance. Danger to himself he discounted. As things stood, he was as good as dead, for he would be dead before the night wore on.

"If you've got to get out of here," he said to Dorn, showing no great interest, "maybe I can fly you out. There's thirty minutes' gas left in my tanks. That's enough to get beyond the swamp, at least—out to a highway."

Dorn fastened cold, suspecting eyes upon him. "Where you're going you won't be any help," he said curtly.

Joe shrugged, outwardly indifferent. "My plane will be spotted from the air. The clouds are lifting and the fog is thinning out. By the time you get started in a boat, there'll be somebody searching this vicinity. I'll make a deal with you to try to take you out."

LANGE pursed wary lips. "What do you mean?"

"Leave Miss Paulling here with John. I'll fly you to the emergency field at Folkston—fifty miles—where you can get a car. You go your way and I go mine—I'll forget I ever saw you in my life."

Dorn snorted, "And leave go a hundred-grand doll! Nix! We take her and we keep her, punk."

Joe shook his head, fighting the pain, weighing his arguments. He had so few that would appeal to men like Dorn and Lange. And then, suddenly, he saw their weakness. Cupidity had brought them this far and cupidity might take them on to their undoing. He said smoothly, "Mr. Paulling has been trying for two days to pay the ransom, but he couldn't make contact with your pay-off man. It will be some time before John can get Miss Paulling out of the swamp —you know that. By that time, you two can get to Atlanta and collect the ransom, yourselves—and leave the pay-off man out of it entirely."

DORN'S crafty eyes narrowed in an appreciative speculation. Confronting him, Joe felt keenly his distrust of all humanity. Dorn grated, "There's plenty G-men might be waiting at this Folkston. You might fly us to Atlanta and dump us in their lap."

With a taunting derision, Joe returned, "Haven't you got guns to see to that? Because your pay-off man has lost his nerve, are you both losing yours? Don't worry about my landing you at Folkston, if I get you off the ground at all." He paused, watching them. Lange's face mirrored his indecision. Dorn was worrying at this tempting bait. Hope surged violently in Joe. Looking at John, trying to judge how much he could trust the old man with the care of Sylvia, he found that wrinkled face serene and reassuring.

"It sounds too easy," Dorn grumbled. "It aint right—I got a feeling it aint right, Lange. But we gotta git out o' here." He made a nervous circle of the room, feet sounding harshly on the rough pine floor. He seemed to have forgotten Sylvia, the threats he made at old John while ago. Pinning his narrowed glance on Joe's smooth, indifferent countenance, he suddenly drew that .45 from his belt and deftly balanced it in his hand. "All right, punk," he said with a dangerous sibilance. "Let's get out of here. But remember—one move—and you get a quick slug through the belly."

Joe disregarded their impatience. He crossed the room to Sylvia, loosening her bonds with swift tenderness. Her voice was urgent. "Joe, be careful, darling! I wish we could go back together—I wish you didn't have to go—alone."

He thought sharply about what he planned to do, out at the end of the hummock, in the deep swamp. As he considered what might happen there, a kind of smothering breathlessness came over him, and his cheeks felt stiff. It was time for him to go, but he couldn't go, yet. Thrusting back all thought of the future, living to the fullness of this moment, he fought at the emotion which ripped through him. "I adore you," he murmured with a tense gentleness. "Always." He took her into his arms, and her kiss was fervent with surrender.

They marched back to the hummock, Joe leading, Dorn and Lange following, single file. The sky was still leaden with low scudding clouds, and mist slanted into the swamp grass while the chill wind brushed across their heads. Considering the ceiling, Joe realized that there would be no "break" in the weather for some hours. If this plan of his failed, everything would fail with it; life would come to an end with that failure. But he must not, he could not fail.

The Lockheed was standing as he had left it. Pausing at the wing, he looked north, measuring the length of the hummock with practised eye, estimating the length of the runway. He said, "We'll have to tramp down the grass as much as we can, so the ship can get speed. And I want to walk down to the end of the hummock and step off the distance."

"Don't try no stall," Dorn warned suspiciously.

Joe laughed at that perennial distrust. Appearing to count his steps, he paced through the grass, his trousers whisking noisily. Grass seeds and moisture covered his garments to his hips. The chill wind turned him cold, but he paid no attention to discomfort.

IN his mind, he was seeing again a day when he had been a cadet at Kelly Field, on solo stage. He was seeing a DH come in slowly for a landing, an instructor in the rear cockpit, a student in the front one. The plane landed high, and pancaked hard—and the landing gear gave way as the ship nosed over briskly. The thing that stuck in Joe Marvin's busy mind was the remembrance of seeing the figure of the instructor sail out of the rear cockpit in a perfect parabola, and strike the ground and roll safely from the vicious impact of the tail group as it slammed over on the earth. The cadet in the front cockpit, with his belt tight about his thighs, had stayed there

as the plane crushed down upon the fuselage—as smoke topped furiously out of spreading dust.

So now what Joe sought was a place to manufacture a similar disaster on this hummock, with Dorn and Lange belted securely in the front cockpit of this plane—while he, unencumbered by his belt, was catapulted from the rear one as the craft nosed over. For Dorn and Lange, if Joe chose his location carefully enough, it would be certain capture. For even if they were not hurt, they would be held prisoners in the forward cockpit, the opening closed against the earth, the weight of the whole airplane pinning them there until they were released from the outside. As for himself, Joe had seen too many planes nose over not to know the danger. But he knew also the certainty with which the plan would work. He would be thrown out, if he left his belt loose—but whether he would be hurt in being thrown out was something which he would have to leave to chance.

But if he could find a place where the hummock slanted steeply to deep water, he would have a place to fall without injury to himself. The water needed to be deep. Joe's blood pulsed with a sustaining excitement.

Dorn and Lange paced with him through the grass.

Ahead of them, the hummock sloped gently into greenish scum that extended half a dozen yards to a low muck bank across the stream. This place wouldn't do. The plane might not nose over properly, and there was no place for Joe to dive. But he only said, "We'll need to tramp more grass."

"Get a move on," Lange growled. "We aint got all day."

WITHOUT reply Joe swung back toward the south. He scanned the hummock edge closely, thinking that if he found deep water there, he might perhaps swerve the plane in the take-off run. But there was no water deep enough. They passed the plane and went toward the southern end of the grass-covered strip of land, while Joe patiently explained that he would have to start the take-off run from there.

And there, at the south end, the water ran deep and black past the low border of the ground. It was a hundred and fifty feet from one bank to the other. This, Joe realized instantly, was the place where he must crash.

But tautly he debated the hazard of that crash. He would have to take off downwind,—from the north to the south of the island,—in order to plunge the Lockheed in this stream. If either Dorn or Lange knew anything of flying, they would suspect, perhaps, what he intended, when he started in that final run. And even if they didn't, the hazards of doing it this way were desperate. Downwind, the plane would nose over much more violently. Joe's chances of coming out alive were infinitely decreased. He might easily be stunned or even killed when he was flung into the water. If he sustained any injury, he would not be able to swim back to shore. Standing at the brink, he went over each element of danger. But it was the only way.

AS they tramped back to the plane, Joe, watchful of their expressions, explained that perhaps the plane could beat down the grass faster than they could. He said, "I'll fire up. You get in, and we'll taxi back and forth. When I've beaten down a runway, I'll swing around and we'll take off." He waited in breathless anxiety while they considered this proposal with customary wariness. Dorn eased his gun around where he could get it easily. He said "Okay, punk." He waited while Lange climbed into the cockpit. On reconsideration, he held the automatic in his hand, and followed.

Joe got in. He pumped the primer nervously. Alert in every sense, the pungent reek of gasoline was pleasant to his nostrils, somehow steadying to his hands. But inside him was a trembling uncertainty which he could not overcome. The starter motor whined upward through a grating octave as it leaped ten thousand revvs; Joe jerked the clutch and the prop arced over and the exhaust emitted a blatant roar.

For ten minutes he sat there. His mind was queerly accelerated, waiting for the thing to come. He thought of Sylvia, and wondered how soon she and old John would start through the swamp in the dugout, along the water trails. He wondered if old John would get her out so she could telephone her father before the ransom had been paid. He wondered how he himself would get out of the swamp, if they started now, before the crash—and he survived it. Then he quit thinking. He climbed out on the fuselage and reached down and fastened the long belt securely around Dorn and

Lange. Tightly, so that it would hold them fast, no matter what the Lockheed struck. And with a kind of numb singleness of purpose, he climbed back to his seat and blasted power to the engine.

They taxied down the grassy hummock, rocking on the inequalities of ground. At the end, Joe turned around. From the cabin, now, no sign of life was visible. There was no use waiting; the time to do this thing was here. Joe checked the ends of his own belt, to be sure they would not tangle in his clothing as he catapulted, and, facing south, downwind, he poured gun to the engine, all the way.

The Lockheed bumped unsteadily. Grass flew up in a brown spray from the prop. The wings whipped through the stuff with a hollow singing sound. They accelerated with amazing quickness to fifty miles an hour, but no more than that. Grass caught at the wings and landing gear, and the plane could not have got off, had Joe wished it. His goggles off his eyes, he was trying to see ahead, to judge the moment when he must shove forward on the stick—as the wheels plunged down into the water. It was funny, to see Dorn sitting there in the spurious security of that forward cockpit, guarding against trickery. Trying to imagine how surprised those two were going to be, Joe tensed himself and got one hand on the cowling, as black water showed up on both sides of the nose.

His actions came as a smooth sequence of coördination, after that. He was conscious of the flooding movement of brown grass beneath the wings; he was conscious of amazement that they were going to strike so quickly and so hard. And then, like a horse stumbling at full gallop, the Lockheed's wheels leaped that little slope of ground—and sank into the water. Joe shoved forward on the stick, and shoved forward on the cowling, too. The nose went down, the whole thing sickeningly sudden, yet not unexpected. The prop was knifing water and the engine's noise was flooding past the cockpit windshield with a kind of submerged thunder, while spray and grass seemed to form a cloud there in the air.

JOE felt himself picked up gently and propelled headfirst through space. He did not even realize that his cheek had left a patch of skin upon the windshield frame. "Jackknifing," he went up and up and floated there for an incredibly long time, while under him was unsubstantial space, and the blur of a red airplane striking silver in the water, turning end for end. Joe got his hands in front of him; then the black blur hit him in the face and he was half stunned by the blow. The icy coldness of that impact was like a jolt of high voltage, and he couldn't get his breath, but then he kicked his way up from the bottom and emerged. Behind him, after he had shaken water from his eyes, débris and grass were still settling in the air above a furiously roiled area of the stream.

And in the center of the stream, two wheels were thrust up by the twin struts of the landing gear. No other portion of the Lockheed showed. A slick of oil was forming there amid a ghastly silence that had echoed back across the gray reaches of the dismal swamp.

THE dugout moved along the silent water lane, widening a V-shaped ripple with its bow. Sylvia Paulling sat amidship, riding forward; Joe Marvin rested in cross-legged discomfort, facing her. He kept reliving the raw excitement of that moment back there in the sunken plane, muscles tensing in reaction still. Dorn's cleverness in crime had been based upon his natural distrust of everyone around him, but it had been his ultimate undoing, too. If he had not been so intently suspicious of what Joe meant to do after they got into the air, he might have seen what Joe was trying to do before they got into the air!

But Joe tried to forget all that, as he watched Sylvia. She was lovely. She was looking at him shyly, with a kind of lambent radiance. Old John was behind them, standing upright in the stern, sphinx-like, statuesque and tireless, poling the dugout down this swamp trail which he knew so intimately. Joe wished something might be done for John, and he resolved to try.

As Sylvia leaned forward and gently touched his hand, it seemed to Joe that life could never have been quite so full without this frightful episode which had awakened him to her. The world was a queer place! No matter how dangerous a situation was, after it was past, you wouldn't wish to have had it changed, much, for fear the whole course of your life might also change. . . . He smiled at Sylvia with a deep tenderness, a deep contentment, while the boat slipped in utter silence between ghostly cypresses that towered in the misty dusk.

Horses Are More Human

The distinguished author of "Strange Woman," "The Keys of the City" and "Morals for Moderns" here contributes a brief but unforgetable war-time drama.

By ELMER DAVIS

BY midsummer of 1862 the young men had all gone away—all the able-bodied ones, except those who had families to support; and Silas Brumby. Nobody knew why Si hadn't enlisted; he was a queer fellow, with no family, no close friends; he never talked much except to the horses he took care of at the livery-stable. It was Judge Woods who put it squarely up to him at last—old Judge Woods, who had fought under Harrison in 1812.

"A big strong fellow like you, Si, with no home ties, ought to be in the army." Si chewed on a straw, and said nothing. "You ride like a centaur," the Judge persisted. ("Whatever that is," thought Si.) "You're better with horses, you know more about horses, than any other man in this town. You're a born cavalryman. . . . And don't you care about saving the Union?"

"Sure I do. But I'd hate to kill anybody, Judge—even a Rebel."

"You?" the Judge snorted. "Why, I saw you half kill a man with your fists last year, on the courthouse square. They had to drag you off him."

"He was beatin' a horse," Si explained. "A worn-out horse that couldn't have pulled that dray out of the mud. I hate to see horses hurt."

"I didn't hear the horse complaining," the Judge muttered.

"You wouldn't. A horse, he don't like to be hurt; but if he is hurt, he'll take an awful lot without a whimper. . . . Unless he's too bad hurt—"

Si shuddered. There it came again, out of the depths of his memory—that horrible scream, like an enormously magnified neigh, but a cry of unendurable agony. He couldn't have been more than four years old when he heard that—the day old Baldy slipped on the icy bridge, and plunged through the rail onto the rocky ledge below. But he never would forget it. . . .

"There'd be a lot of that in a battle," said Si uneasily. "Horses gettin' bad hurt, I mean. I don't know as I could stand it."

"Horses? My God, you don't think they're more human than people, do you? When men are getting hurt, being killed—"

"I figure they asked for it, Judge. But the horses—it aint their war—nor even their Union, so far as they know. Don't seem fair for them to get hurt. I hate to think of it!" Si shuddered again.

"Hell!" said the Judge, disgusted. "You hate to think of getting hurt yourself, more likely. They're talking of a draft, Brumby, to catch the men who won't volunteer. . . . I hope to God it catches you!"

And in due time it did.

THE First Michigan had gone over the guns in the road, cutting down the gray-clad gunners; the Seventh Michigan was trotting up in support. Sergeant Brumby peered vainly into the murk of dust and smoke ahead; but on the left the air was clearer, and between the trotting ranks he caught a glimpse of long lines of dismounted men advancing under fire. The Rebels had stopped an attack up that way, earlier; but this new General Sheridan didn't stay stopped; he was at them again—and Sergeant Brumby, at last, was in what you could call a real battle.

Not that he hadn't seen plenty of action—outpost skirmishes, the raid to Charlottesville in the winter, fighting back there in the Wilderness last week. Plenty of action—and he hadn't minded

Painter's troubles were over; but Si turned away from what he couldn't bear to look at—and saw a horseman coming at him swinging a saber. . . . Si leveled his revolver, squeezed the trigger.

Illustrated by Grattan Condon

it half as much as he had expected. The whine of bullets was no fun, of course, but pretty soon you were too busy to think much about it. And as for killing —when a crowd of men in blue fired their carbines or revolvers at a crowd of men in gray, how could you know who had hit the men who fell? And the secret horror that was lurking in his memory had never been awakened, yet. Si Brumby had seen horses killed, horses wounded—but by bullets. A horse could take that; it needed more than a bullet-wound to evoke that shriek of agony.

THE trot quickened to a canter; Sergeant Brumby's revolver was out, ready; his knees tightened on Painter's flanks. Good old Painter—the best horse he had ever ridden, the best friend he had ever had. It was Painter's alertness and speed that had saved him last winter, when he ran into one of Fitzhugh Lee's patrols. . . . He'd need a good horse today; this was getting hotter. From the front came a heavier burst of firing, the screeching Rebel yell. Another screech; a shell flew overhead, exploding a little way behind him; he saw a puff of smoke floating away from the gun that had fired it, across the fields. And now, toward the right flank where Sergeant Brumby rode, a straggling crowd of horsemen in gray came galloping, firing as they came.

He pointed his revolver at the crowd, fired again and again. So did others; the men in gray—not so many, after all —checked their horses, firing into the flank of the blue column as it galloped past. Brumby saw an officer with a flowing bronze beard, heard his silvery voice even above the firing: "Give it to them, boys! Give it to them!"

Up ahead, something was wrong; the column slowed down, ranks crowded ranks, horse jostling horse. The First had been struck by a countercharge, was being pushed back; the press grew thicker; men began to turn their horses; the whole column was drifting toward the rear. Sergeant Brumby drew Painter aside, out of the jam. Now a man could see where he was, what he could do—

A terrific concussion; he was pitched headlong over Painter's neck, and hit the ground so hard that for an instant he lay stunned. And then he came back to consciousness—the shuddering consciousness of a four-year-old child, suddenly aware of undreamed-of horror. It rang again in his ears—that magnified neigh, a scream of intolerable agony.

He staggered to his feet. His cap was gone; his saber had flown out of the scabbard, fallen a dozen feet away. . . . To hell with that thing! He didn't need it while he still had his revolver. Maybe he wasn't badly hurt, or even hurt at all; but Painter—old Painter, his best friend, lay there screaming, his bowels half torn out by the exploding shell.

Sergeant Brumby shook his arms, howling curses at them all. The gun that had got Painter was far away; but that gray line was close, and the bronze-bearded officer in command was laughing. Laughing! For the first time in his life Si Brumby took deliberate aim at a particular man, and fired. The bronze-bearded man swayed in the saddle; his hat flew off. With a grin of vindictive satisfaction, Si turned back to his horse. Good old Painter, dying in agony; there was one thing his best friend could still do for him. Si shut his eyes, thrust the muzzle of his revolver against Painter's forehead, pulled the trigger. The bang, the recoil, told him that Painter's troubles were over; but he turned clear around, away from what he couldn't bear to look at, before he opened his eyes—and saw a horseman in gray coming at him, swinging a saber. . . .

AROUND the bronze-bearded man there had risen cries of consternation: "The General! The General!" An officer seized his bridle rein, led his horse to the rear; another officer—only a boy, red-eyed from smoke and sleeplessness—stared in horror at that incredible sight, and then looked back at the Union sergeant, bending over a fallen horse.

"He got Jeb Stuart!" the boy groaned. "Damn him, he got Jeb Stuart!"

Jeb Stuart, the greatest man in the boy officer's world—the knightly commander who always went into battle gay and laughing. The boy officer raised his revolver, pulled the trigger. . . . Empty! He flung it away; he'd rather do this job with a saber, anyway. He wished he could do it with his bare hands. He spurred his horse forward.

Si Brumby looked up at him contemptuously. Saber, huh? He leveled his revolver at the gray-coated body, squeezed the trigger. . . . A click. He jerked the trigger in frantic haste; another click, another. And as the swinging saber came down on his head, he realized that he had fired his priceless last bullet into his horse.

The Tattooed Man

The doctor swung around, his eyes blazing. "Has anybody been fooling about with this body?"

The gypsy detective Isaac Heron solves one of his strangest cases.

By WILLIAM J. MAKIN

"THE tattooed man has died," said Isaac Heron quietly. "I thought you would like to see the body before it is buried."

Detective Inspector Graves, swathed in a raincoat, his bowler hat dripping wet, exploded amazement and exasperation at his friend the gypsy. They stood on the edge of a fair-ground, where a gasoline lamp hissed and spluttered in the rain.

"D'you really mean to tell me, Heron, that you've brought me from a comfortable fireside to this God-forsaken part of London to see a corpse! Good heavens, don't I see enough bodies in the course of my work?"

"But not tattooed bodies," said Isaac Heron, with a queer smile.

"But you said this tattooed man had died."

"Oh, everything is in order," said the gypsy. "The doctor has signed the death-certificate, and the poor fellow is to be buried in the morning. Unless you stop it."

Detective Inspector Graves frowned.

"But why should I? If the doctor is satisfied that the man died from natural causes—"

Isaac Heron shrugged his shoulders.

"Better come inside the tent out of the rain, anyhow," he suggested.

And because this well-to-do gypsy had on a number of occasions been of very real help in solving difficult cases, the Scotland Yard man followed the lithe figure of Isaac Heron into that maze of drenched light that called itself, ironically, a Fun Fair.

They passed gaudy roundabouts churning out last year's jazz. Booths with dart-throwers, shooting galleries with spouting celluloid balls, and lemonade stalls with bellied bowls of yellow liquid impeded their progress. Eventually, pushing through an apathetic and drifting crowd of damp people, they reached a dark, deserted booth where no lights were flaring.

It was possible, however, to glimpse a gaudy painting of a man whose torso was smothered with fantastic and writhing designs.

Graves stopped to read an announcement on a signboard which assaulted the eyes with the wording:

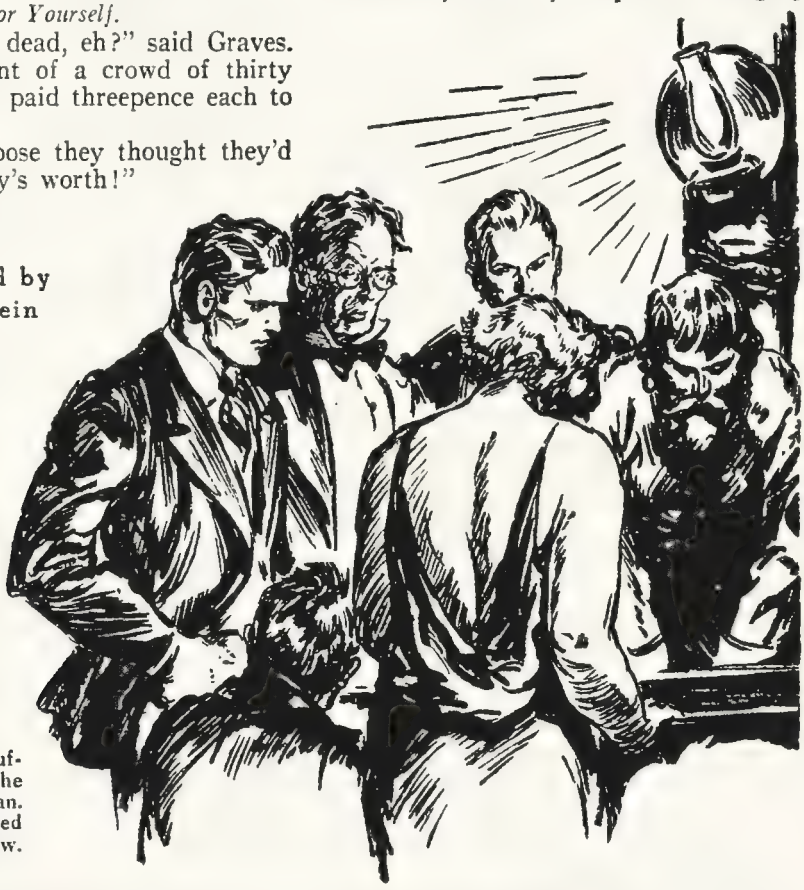
See The Eighth Wonder Of The World
The Greatest Of All
Tattooed Men
Elmer Hayes
He Bears 350 Designs
Uniquely Artistic
On Every Part Of His Body
Walk Up and See Him
for Yourself.

"And so he's dead, eh?" said Graves.

"Died in front of a crowd of thirty people who had paid threepence each to see him."

"Well, I suppose they thought they'd had their money's worth!"

Illustrated by
Hervé Stein



"He must have suffered," muttered the Scotland Yard man. "Poisoned!" wheezed a voice at his elbow.

Graves stumbled up the wooden steps, across a little platform, and followed the gypsy into the booth.

A strange scene was revealed. A single low-burning lamp was slung from the canvas roof. A group of figures, as fantastic as any painted by Goya, were clustered beneath it. The Fat Lady, in a baby frock, glycerine-like tears squeezing from her eyes. The Lion-tamer, uncomfortably tapping his stained riding-breeches with a whip. Three dwarfs standing on chairs to peer over the shoulders of others. Shirt-sleeved men from the booths, and a solitary Italian ice-cream vendor.

The group fell apart as Isaac Heron advanced, and in the dim light their faces seemed filled with genuine sorrow. For a moment Graves hesitated; then, with an uncomfortable feeling, he removed his hat. He found himself regarding two trestles which upheld a coffin in which lay the body of Elmer Hayes, the Tattooed Man.

Even in death that purple-pricked body was exhibited. The huge chest displayed a series of fantastic designs—butterflies, snakes, airplanes winging among purple clouds, hearts with daggers in them and purple blood dripping, a Union Jack and the American Stars and Stripes, a clipper on a rough purple sea—there was no end to the conglomeration of pictures.

BUT it was to the now rigid face that Graves turned his gaze. Although the eyes were closed and the face possessed a semblance of peace in death, there was something drawn, something tortured, in those features that suggested the end was no happy one.

"He must have suffered," muttered the Scotland Yard man.

"Poisoned!" wheezed a voice at his very elbow.

The detective turned. A mustached man with eyes magnified by spectacles was standing there.

"What d'you mean by that—poisoned?" snapped Graves.

"Just what I said, poisoned," went on the mustached man. "Poisoned by his tea, I should say. He would eat mussels, and drink any sort of liquor that was given to him. That was the tea he had before he died. I warned him against it. Told him his stomach couldn't stand it. But of course he paid no attention. Nobody ever does, to me. But I come in at the death."

He cackled, in a grim fashion.

"Who are you, anyhow?" asked the Inspector.

"A doctor," replied the other, twisting his mustache importantly. "They call me the shilling doctor, but I don't always get my shilling."

"And you say this man was poisoned?"

"By himself! Acute toxins resulting from indigestion attacking the heart. Or as we physicians call it, gastric enteritis. You'll find that on the death-certificate. . . . Have you a match?"

His tobacco-stained mouth was slanting a cigarette at the detective.

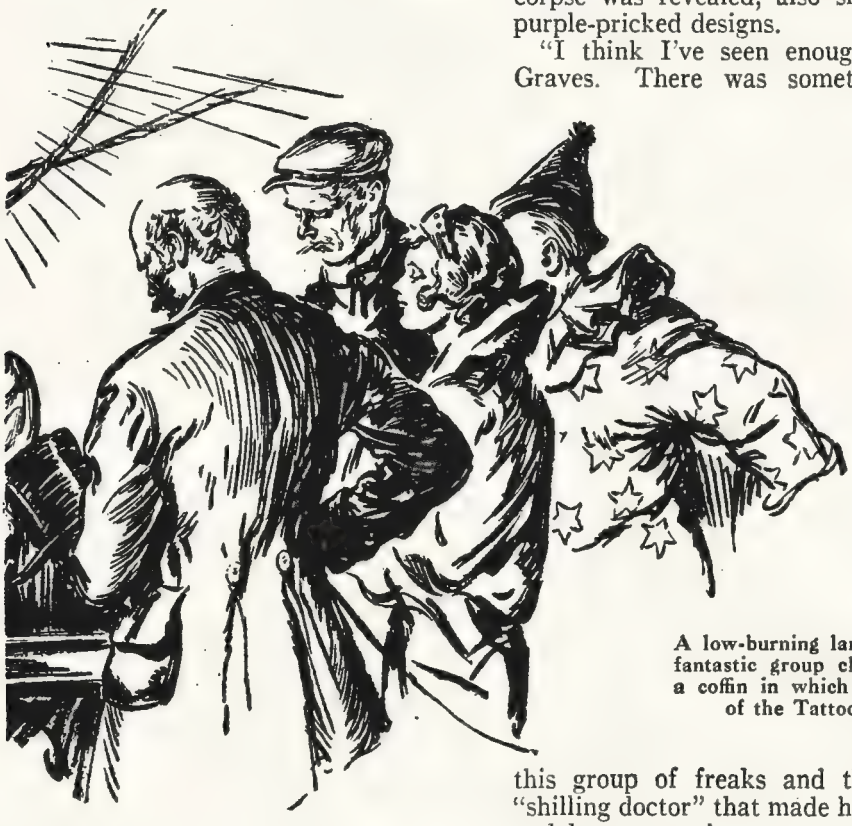
But it was Isaac Heron who obliged.

"I'd like my friend to see the designs on the back of the body, Doctor, if you've no objection," he said, holding a match to the cigarette.

"None at all. Delighted," said the medical man. "Allow me."

He plunged his hands into the coffin and with a deft twist of powerful wrists turned the body over. The back of the corpse was revealed, also smothered in purple-pricked designs.

"I think I've seen enough," grunted Graves. There was something about this group of freaks and the sardonic "shilling doctor" that made him feel sick, and he was anxious to regain the rain-slashed darkness of the open air.



A low-burning lamp revealed a fantastic group clustered about a coffin in which lay the body of the Tattooed Man.

"But I particularly want you to see this design, Graves," insisted the quiet voice of Isaac Heron.

Reluctantly, the Inspector followed the pointing brown finger and bent his head nearer. For among that phantasmagoria of dragons and flaming torches and yawning crocodiles was a tombstone. And marked on the tombstone, minutely pricked but clearly discernible were the words:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
ELMER HAYES
DIED NOV. 30, 1935
Y.S.

"And when did this poor fellow die?" asked Graves.

"Yesterday," replied the doctor importantly. He was not looking at the body. "You will find it on the death

certificate, which is quite in order. 'Gastric enteritis. November 30, 1935.'"

"Thank you, Doctor," said Isaac Heron.

"But—but has he seen this?" blurted out Graves.

"Seen what?" asked the physician. He bent down over the corpse. "Umph! That's queer. November 30th. The very day he died. I wonder how he got that tattoo mark?"

"It seems fairly recent to me," said Heron.

The doctor nodded. "Yes, it is. Very recent." He swung round upon the little group of freaks. "Has anybody been fooling about with this body?"

His eyes were blazing behind the spectacles.

A SHIRT-SLEEVED individual pushed his way forward.

"P'raps I can explain, guv'nor!"

"Who are you?"

The shirt-sleeved individual jerked his head in the direction of the body.

"He was my show. I paid him his wages."

"And what do you know about this tattoo mark?" demanded Graves.

The showman scratched his head.

"Well, guv'nor, all I can say is he had it done hisself. He was allus anxious to add a new picture to his collection, as it were. Most big towns we stopped at, he would look round for a tattooer and ask for a new picture. That one you're looking at now was done about a week ago. Leastways, that's when Elmer started going to a new tattooer he'd found."

The doctor grunted.

"Well, that explains it," He turned to the Scotland Yard man and the gypsy. "Seen enough?"

"Quite enough, thank you, Doctor," said Isaac Heron.

Deftly the body was turned over. As the men moved away, the group of show people, the freaks, the dwarfs, and the workers closed in again upon the coffin and resumed their silent staring mourning.

"There's Elmer's daughter," indicated the shirt-sleeved man. "Poor girl, she misses her father, shocking!"

Isaac Heron, followed by the detective, moved over to a figure sitting on an upturned bucket and crouched in an attitude of grief.

"My dear," he murmured.

A shock of black hair was raised, revealing a face whose slightly yellow tinge, high cheek-bones and oblique eyes emphasized an Asiatic origin.

"Her mother was a Jap," whispered the showman. "She died when the girl was born, so Elmer told me."

"Is there anything I can do for you?" asked Heron.

The girl shook her head.

"Nothing—nothing. Father is dead—and that's all."

Sobs choked the rest of her utterance. Sadly the gypsy turned away. He whispered something to the showman, who nodded. It was the shilling doctor who broke in upon them.

"Well, I suppose there's a queue of patients waiting for me. You won't need me any more." The end of his glowing cigarette was almost burning his lips. "Everything is in order. You've got the death-certificate. . . . Good night, gentlemen."

And peering through his spectacles, he shuffled away into the night.

Five minutes later Isaac Heron and Detective Inspector Graves were standing once more in the rain on the edge of the fair-ground.

"Well?" asked the Scotland Yard man.

"Queer, isn't it, that Elmer Hayes should die on the very day that the tattooed tombstone on his back indicated?" observed the gypsy.

"Might be coincidence," said Graves.

"And it might be murder," Heron rejoined quietly.

The Scotland Yard man started. "I saw no indications of that."

"Not even the redness and swelling beneath the tattooing of the tombstone?"

"Heavens, no! Are you suggesting—"

"Poison!" nodded Isaac Heron. "Certainly not gastric enteritis. That shilling doctor is overworked and careless. And once he's signed a death-certificate, he believes in it implicitly."

Graves stared at his companion. "Aren't you rather jumping to conclusions?"

"Maybe I am," admitted the gypsy. "But here's a taxi. Let's take it. There's something else I want to show you tonight."

Graves was too bewildered to protest.

"I SAW the body of Elmer Hayes earlier in the day," explained Isaac Heron, leaning back comfortably in the taxi. "And incidentally, I spotted that peculiarly new tattoo mark."

"Who told you of his death?" asked Graves.

"A brother of the black tents," smiled the gypsy. "News travels fast among show folk. And I confess to a Barnum-like fascination for freaks. Yes, I went to see the body of that poor fellow out of sheer curiosity."

"And having seen it?"

"I telephoned for one of the best tattooists in London to come and see it. You probably know the man. He has his shop, or studio, as he prefers to call it, near Waterloo Bridge."

"I know him," nodded Graves.

"I showed him that tombstone on the back of the dead man. He examined it through a magnifying glass. To him that design was as plain as a fingerprint to your department at Scotland Yard."

"What was plain about it?"

"That it was the work of a Japanese tattoo artist. I don't know whether you are aware, Graves, but the art of tattooing began in the East and reached its highest development in Japan. The Japanese became past-masters of the art. Then it was prohibited in the East, and it traveled across the world and flourished in our East End."

"Japanese!" said the startled Graves. "That girl we saw weeping for her father was half Japanese."

Isaac Heron nodded.

"Her mother was pure Japanese. She married Elmer Hayes when, as a sailor, he landed in Japan. And as my tattoo expert pointed out, the majority of the three hundred and fifty designs on that body we saw had been done by Japanese artists."

"As also the tombstone?"

"Yes, the tombstone that was pricked into his body only a few days ago," emphasized the gypsy. "But the artist who executed that design, even though murder was in his heart and stringing at the end of his needles, couldn't resist putting his signature to his devilment."

"Signature! I saw no signature." protested Graves.

"Just the letters '*Y.S.*' beneath the inscription on the tombstone," said Heron. "They were enough."

The Scotland Yard man gave a quick glance out of the window of the taxi.

"I say, Heron, this fellow is heading for Limehouse. Is that all right?"

"Quite all right. Limehouse is where the Orientals insist upon clustering, in London. Chinese—and Japanese," he added significantly.

"What a beautiful white skin for tattooing!" purred the old Japanese.

"Japanese?"

"I took the liberty of telephoning the Poplar police-station in your name," explained Heron. "I asked them if they knew of any Japanese claiming to be a tattooer, with the initials *Y.S.*, who had set up shop in their district. I must say they were exceedingly smart. Within ten minutes they had the information for me. Yogai Safu was my man. His address was Limehouse Causeway. And here we are!"

HERON tapped sharply on the driver's window. The man slurred his cab against the pavement and stopped. The two men stepped out. They were at the entrance to that dark, twisting gully of a street where solitary men shuffle quietly against unlighted houses.

Limehouse Causeway.

Followed by the Scotland Yard man, Isaac Heron plunged into that cleft in the darkness. They walked for about a hundred yards, then the gypsy stopped outside a shuttered shop that presented a blind exterior. The gypsy stretched out a hand, found a door-knob, turned it and padded along a narrow corridor. Then he opened another door and entered a

room badly lit by a shield of bluish white gas.

Graves shuffled after him and peered about expectantly. It was the second strange interior he had seen that evening. The dirty yellow of the walls was an almost perfect camouflage for the wrinkled almond face of an old Japanese squatting on a heap of greasy cushions. There was not even a blink of surprise on that impassive Oriental face as it regarded the intruders.

"Yogai Safu?" asked the gypsy.

"Your honorable servant," replied the Japanese, bowing and displaying a smooth bald head. "What would you have me do, gentlemen?"

His English was passable, his manner completely assured. Isaac Heron smiled easily.

"I've a friend here who wants to be tattooed." Graves started; but Heron went on without a pause: "A sailorman tells me that Japs are the best at the job, and I saw the card in your window yesterday. Can you do the job?"

"It is, gentlemen, somewhat late in the evening."

"But my friend is willing to pay," added Heron.

The Scotland Yard man sniffed. This opening conversation was not to his liking. He preferred more direct methods. He opened his mouth and spoke roughly.

"What I want to know—" he began.

But Heron quickly interposed.

"My friend, as you will gather, is a little nervous. But then they all are, eh? Graves, strip off your coat and bare your arm to the gentleman."

Mechanically, but more worried than ever, the Scotland Yard man obeyed. Despite the absurdity of the situation, his trained eyes were observing every detail, every object in that strange room.

A LONG low table was covered with little colored bowls and bottles—inks for the tattooer. A bunch of gleaming needles lay in a tray. And behind the table, against the wall, was pasted a medley of designs: mermaids rising on their tails, cherry trees dripping blossoms, a naked diver fighting a shark under water, a dragon breathing fire—these and scores of other sensational and murderous designs were ranged there.

"What a beautiful white skin for tattooing!"

The old Japanese was purring as he took the bared left arm of Graves in his own yellow fingers. The Scotland Yard man shuddered at the touch. At the same time he gave an appealing glance at Isaac Heron which suggested that the farce had gone far enough.

"And will the gentleman decide upon the design?" asked the Japanese.

Heron replied with that subtle smile:

"My friend is often in dangerous situations. He might easily be killed and his body be unrecognized. Now I suggest that, as a form of identification, you tattoo a tombstone on his arm."

"A tombstone!"

The oblique eyes of the Japanese seemed to become mere slits in a yellow mask as he repeated the words.

"Why not?" inquired the gypsy. "It's not an unusual design, is it?"

"No."

"Then go ahead."

The yellow hand stretched out for a needle. The point was tried against a thumb. He lit a spirit lamp, and dabbed the needle in the flame. Then he dipped it into a little bowl of purple ink.

"And what name would the honorable gentleman like to have tattooed on the tombstone?" asked the Japanese, the needle poised in the air.

"Detective Inspector Graves of Scotland Yard," replied Isaac Heron.

GRAVES felt the yellow clutch on his arm tighten. But on the face of the tattooer there was no expression.

"Very well," he murmured, and dipped the needle into another bowl.

The slitlike eyes were regarding the sinewy white arm that he held in his grasp. Beads of perspiration broke out on the brow of the detective. His own gaze was fixed upon that gleaming needle that was about to plunge into his arm.

But even as the needle came toward the white skin, the hand of Isaac Heron was quicker. His fingers clutched the hand of the old Japanese in a vise-like grip.

"Grab the other hand, Graves!" came his warning voice.

The Scotland Yard man was only too eager to obey. In a few seconds the Japanese was lying on the cushions, his yellow wrists circled with the steel handcuffs which Graves always thoughtfully carried about with him.

"Poison, as I suspected," said Heron, sniffing at one of the little bowls. "Once he heard you were from Scotland Yard, he realized he was suspected. He intended you to go the same way as Elmer Hayes. Isn't that so, Yogai Safu?"

For once the yellow mask was twisted with rage.

"Elmer Hayes was a white dog. He deserved to die. Twenty years ago I swore, at the shrine of my ancestors, to kill him!"

"Twenty years ago!"

Isaac Heron lifted an eyebrow inquiringly.

IN native fashion the Japanese hissed through clenched teeth:

"Twenty years ago, that Elmer Hayes pose as honorable gentleman, and come to my studio in Yokohama for be tattooed. He wanted many, many designs upon body. I not know it was intention to show himself to crowds and make money by displaying body. Ugh! A vulgar practice. But many things I did not know at that time."

"What else didn't you know?" asked the gypsy.

"Elmer Hayes had infatuated my daughter, my only daughter. She was as sweet as cherry blossom in spring. I loved her as the last descendant of most honorable ancestors. That white dog from overseas smuggled her away in steamer."

The old man's voice was firm. Not a tear trickled down that wrinkled face.

"And then?" encouraged Heron.

"I make for *hara-kiri*," said the old man. "But even as I prepare before shrine of ancestors, voice told me it was duty to get vengeance first. Honor had been violated. Until stain had been washed out with blood, my work on this miserable earth not ended. I packed up my needles, my inks and my kakemono, and sailed for America.

"A stranger in strange countries, it was not easy for me to follow their path. I find myself always too late. Across America, into Europe, through far lands I follow—for twenty years! I must stop often to earn money with tattoo. I open studio here in London. Then one morning the man himself walked into studio.

"The gods of my ancestors had answered my prayers and given enemy into my hands. He not recognize me. I used the same initials, but fake name. He saw only an old Nipponese who practice ancient art of tattooing. He asked me to prick design on back, one of few empty places left. I think first kill him quick. Then I remember he taken my daughter to live his life of shame; she had died in poverty. He must suffer for that. So, slowly, with cunning, I pricked poison into his body while making tombstone on his back. I knew just when that poison would take effect. So I pricked date on tombstone."

"Yes, we saw it," said Graves roughly.

"On his dead body, eh?" chuckled the old man.

There was silence for a moment. Then Isaac Heron spoke.

"There is one thing you do not know, old man," he said.

"And what is that, honorable sir?"

"Elmer Hayes has a daughter. You are her grandfather."

Once again came that hiss of emotion through clenched teeth. The old Japanese seemed to age before their eyes.

"That I did not know," he faltered. "Is—is she beautiful?"

"Like her mother."

The old man sighed.

"It is not right that her grandfather should be branded as a murderer."

THE remark seemed to rouse Detective Inspector Graves. He reached out for his coat and struggled into it.

"We'll be making our way to the station," he said. "I must phone to stop the burial of Elmer Hayes for tomorrow."

He took hold of the old Japanese and raised him from the couch of cushions. In that moment the man seemed to age incredibly; he swayed and almost crumpled to the floor. With a jerk Graves brought him to his feet.

"I apologize, honorable sir," smiled the Japanese weakly. "You see, I am dying."

"Dying!" Graves stared, disconcerted.

"Yes," mumbled the old man. "My work now is finished. I have avenged. It is better for the girl—she who is my granddaughter—that I do not live."

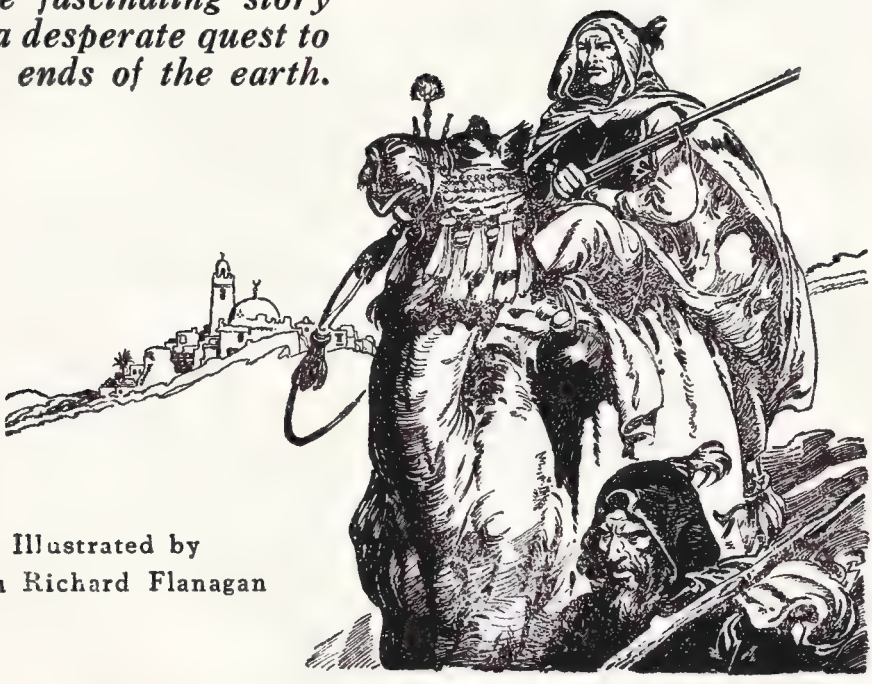
He seemed to lapse into a coma. With the help of Isaac Heron the detective carried the Japanese to the door. Under the light of the street lamp the gypsy gave the old man a searching glance.

"Yes," he nodded to Graves. "I think he is dying—and because he has determined in his mind to die. I doubt whether you'll ever get him to trial. The ways of the Oriental are strange, Graves."

And he went off in search of a taxi, leaving Graves supporting a very old and unconscious man.

Another of Isaac Heron's strange cases, "Murder on the Merry-Go-Round," will be described in an early issue.

The fascinating story of a desperate quest to the ends of the earth.



Illustrated by
John Richard Flanagan

CARAVAN

The Story Thus Far:

ON a wild night in January, my uncle Thurland Spillane came home to my father's farm, which is on the road from Glengariff to Kenmare. Seven years he had been away, he and his brother my Uncle Flane. Untamed hawks of trouble were they both, ranging the wide world.

"And where might you have come from now?" asked my father.

"From London," answered Thurland. "I came a roundabout way out of Russia. By China and other places. I have hurried here because another person—a person that I love more than my two eyes and my two hands—is making for your farm. Across the world she is heading for this little spot in Kerry!"

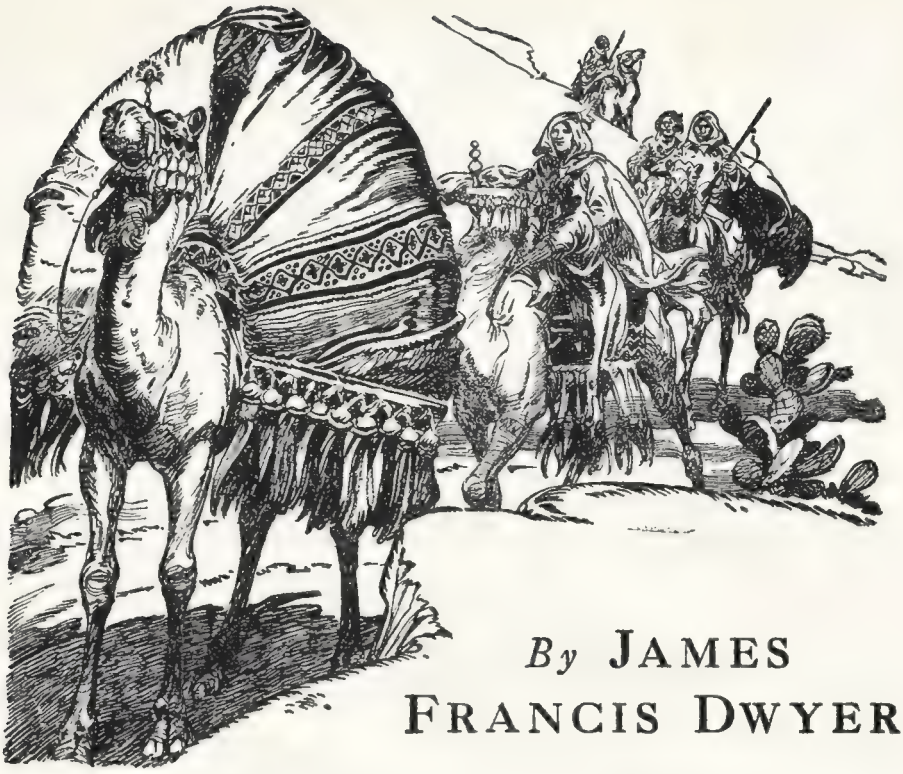
And he went on to tell us of this lovely lady, daughter of a czar and a woman of Perm. In Irkutsk, the assassins of Czar Nicholas had sought to kill her too, and Thurland had fought for her, and killed the assassins—and there was a price on his head in Russia because of that. . . . They had fallen in love, but had to part to evade pursuit. And he had given her the name of our farm in Kerry as the only fixed address by which he might be reached. Now, he had learned, she was coming—and he was here to meet her. . . .

She came at last, a lady even lovelier than Thurland described her. And it was a joy to see the two homeless wanderers together at our peaceful farm in Kerry. But pursuit caught up with them—in the person of a giant Russian. Thurland fought him, choked him—left him for dead, and fled the country again with the lady—Anastasia, her name was.

Long months passed. Then came a letter from Thurland—a letter from Fez, where he and Flane and the lady were making ready for a hazardous journey into the far Sahara in quest of a tremendous buried treasure Flane knew of.

I was fifteen, and strong for my age. And Africa came up and snuffed around my bed. That night I made a bundle

Copyright, 1936, by The McCall Company (The Blue Book Magazine). All rights reserved.



By JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

TREASURE

of my clothes, climbed out of the window and took the road to Kenmare.

In Cork I made friends with a boy of my own age, and through his help won a job as cabin-boy on a ship sailing to Morocco. At Algiers my friend Felix and I were given shore-leave; and we got into trouble aplenty in a native café; indeed we might have lost our lives had we not been rescued by—my Uncle Thurland! None other! Passing by, he had heard our Irish voices.

Felix rejoined the ship; but I stayed with my Uncles Thurland and Flane—and with Anastasia, who was with them. They had a map which located this grand Caravan Treasure far in the southern Sahara, and were making ready to set out. With them I went—to Fez and Marrakech and thence out into the desert beyond the last French outpost. With us also went an Arab wrestler Ahmed Mansour whom my Uncle Flane had beat in a great bout, and had made friends with. And also in our party were two other natives, the hairy man Blore, and a strange dwarf who knew something of the Caravan Treasure. . . .

One night as we were camped near a mud-walled village, I was roused by a terrible scream; and the flashlight in the hands of Flane showed the hairy man running back to us. In the spear of light I saw the blade still red in his hands.

"Douse the light!" he cried. "Help me with the dwarf! Quick! He has been knocked senseless!"

Ahmed Mansour and Flane hoisted the unconscious Haila onto the saddle before Blore, the hairy one holding him there. Thurland put Anastasia on her camel, the rest of us scrambled quickly on our mounts, and hurriedly we went forward into the darkness. Africa had started in pursuit of us—Africa the terrible. *(The story continues in detail:)*

WITH the faint light of the rising moon we halted and checked up. We were a little disorganized, for the happen-

ing had rushed us off our feet, so to speak; and till the moon permitted us to count noses, we were not sure of our number.

"What was it, Jimmy?" whispered Anastasia.

"I don't know," I answered, lying lest I cause her pain. "I think some one was trying to steal a camel."

"But that scream?" she breathed. "I —I can hear it now."

Thurland was busy pouring a drink of brandy down the throat of the dwarf, who was now returning to consciousness. Flane had ridden back a few yards and was listening in case we were pursued.

We went on—blindly, so I thought. Thurland and Flane had arguments with the hairy man, but he persisted that he was going in the right direction. When morning came, he pointed to a bare peak to the westward as proof that he was not out in his reckoning.

We were in the center of a sandy plain, the peak to the west the only high ground in sight. There were no trees. A few stunted bushes fought with the sand dunes that forever tried to smother them.

"Twenty miles farther on is the village of the dwarf," said Blore. He grinned and added: "There his faithful wife waits for him, though she hasn't seen him for more than a year."

Whether it was the blow that the dwarf had received or the nearness to his own village that affected him, I do not know; but that morning he couldn't stop singing. Sitting in the meager shadow thrown by a blanket stretched between two thorn-bushes, he sang songs of love in a low buzzing note that bit at the ear like the humming of a blow-fly.

The song annoyed Flane, for it seemed to accentuate the heat. Flane asked him to move out of earshot, so that the rest of us could sleep.

Blore explained the song. It told of the arrival of the dwarf at his village, and how in the soft darkness before the dawn he would sneak quietly into the mud hut and creep into the arms of his beloved. And the song told of her charms. She had eyes, according to the verse, into which a lover fell to be drowned in their sweetness. She had limbs more beautiful than the limbs of a gazelle; and her lips hit the heart of a watcher like the blow from a poniard.

"Tell him to walk out on the sands and do his singing there," said Flane.

The dwarf, unable to keep quiet, moved out on the sandy plain and continued his song. His words came thin and faint to us as we tried to sleep. . . . I wondered about the dwarf. He had informed my Uncle Thurland that he would not desert us. Our caravan would pass about midnight within three miles of his village; he would slip away on foot, pay a quick visit to his wife and overtake us when we camped at daylight. He would on no account mention that we were in the neighborhood. Little did we know then of the trouble that call would bring upon us—the load of black trouble that nearly overwhelmed us.

WHEN night fell, we moved on, the dwarf still humming his song of love. The moon was a white-faced hag that watched us, knowing perhaps that we were running into trouble. The stunted camel-thorn bushes were witches, and around them danced the jinn that the winds of the wastes built out of handfuls of sand. It was a bad night—a night that was out for mischief, as they say in Kerry, waiting for some opening that would give it a chance to work off its deviltry.

A little before midnight we heard the faint throbbing of a tom-tom. It came from the village of the dwarf, and the sound made him a little fey. He slipped from the camel and ran off across the sands, and we watched him till he disappeared behind a sandy ridge.

"Do you think we'll ever see him again?" asked Flane.

"I don't know," laughed Thurland. "Perhaps the lady may have found some one to amuse her during his absence. If so, he might catch up to us."

We made camp at daylight close to a well. We filled the goat-skin bags and stretched ourselves in the shade. There

were tracks of camels, goats and donkeys around the well-head, but there was no one in sight. At midday we lunched on dried gazelle meat, cooked on the embers, with *kous-kous*, and biscuits. We wondered a little about the dwarf. Would the lady with the eyes in which lovers were drowned, be delighted to see the little fellow when he crept into her hut?

IT was in the hottest part of the afternoon that my Uncle Thurland saw a running figure out on the sands. At first we thought it a gazelle; but as it came nearer, we saw that it was a man.

"It's Haila!" cried Thurland. "It is! And he's running as if Old Nick himself was at his heels!"

It was the dwarf, for sure. A crazed dwarf with the eyes of him popping out of his head. Stumbling with weakness, he covered the last hundred yards and dropped at the feet of Thurland. With his arms around the legs of my uncle, he begged protection; and a feeling of trouble in store was upon each one of us as he started to splutter out his story.

This was Haila's tale as he told it to us there by the Well of El-Djanet. An old tale, but a thrilling one to us, because of the trouble that reached out with steely fingers and dragged us into the mess.

Quick in the telling was Haila, for death was at his heels. It seemed that the moment he reached the village, he had dived into the narrow burrow in which stood the mud hut that sheltered his wife. Thinking to surprise the lady, he had thrust his arm through a round hole in the door and pulled a secret string that held a bar of iron in place. The bar fell; the door opened; and Haila, crying the name of his wife, rushed toward the corner where the bed of sheepskins was spread in the days before he wandered to far-off Marrakech.

He was halfway to the bed when he came into violent collision with an unknown who was seeking the door with the same fine burst of speed that was bringing Haila to the bedside of his wife. The two met with the force of two rams fighting for the supremacy of a sheep paddock. They crashed to the floor; and Haila knew by the touch of steely fingers that were groping for his throat that it was no wifely caress he was receiving. He knew that.

Over and over they rolled, the dwarf getting the worst of it; then the tide turned. The unknown lover had not thought fit to bring his knife to the rendezvous, while Haila had his. At a moment when they broke apart, the dwarf got a chance to pull it from his belt, and he made a blind jab in the darkness. He buried the weapon between two ribs of the other; and the fellow's yells and his wife's screams woke the quarter. The dwarf fled toward our camp.

"Save me!" screamed Haila, holding tight to the ankles of my uncle. "He is the nephew of the Caïd! He has three hundred uncles and cousins! They come! They come! They will torture me and cut me into little pieces!"

The hairy man clucked fiercely and pointed out across the wastes. A black mass from which came an infamous clamor was moving across the sand—moving with an accompaniment of shouts and screams that were deafening as they came nearer. The three hundred uncles and cousins were in pursuit of Haila, and all thoughts of the Woman with Golden Feet flew from our minds as we stared at them.

My Uncle Thurland acted quickly. He stooped, dragged the fear-stricken dwarf into the tent where Anastasia was resting, and thrust him under a camel-hair blanket. "Stay there till I tell you to come out!" he said. "If you move, it'll be death."

The mob were upon us then. At their head was the Caïd, a tall dark man of about thirty years of age, and with no more politeness than an angry bull. He wanted Haila. He screamed his demand, and the hundreds behind him echoed it.

NOW Thurland Spillane was a fine and fearless protector. The Caïd made his request in French, and Thurland answered him in the same tongue—answered him with cold and careful lies. Haila, said Thurland, and there wasn't a quiver in his voice, had rushed by the tents, screaming out that he was pursued, and had fled into the big sand dunes to the eastward of us.

It was a lie with trimmings, a fine lie that burrowed into the ears of the Caïd and his followers. And the manner of Thurland as he stood and delivered it must have made the sweet angels of mercy in heaven weep as they listened.

The Caïd wished to look within the tent, and he attempted to push Thurland aside, but there was murder in the eye of my uncle. He caught the village chieftain by his flowing burnous and hurled him backward amongst his

The Caïd stared at Anastasia; then he said to Thurland: "You must come to the village—with all your party."

followers. The hairy man clucked excitedly, and Flane swore softly.

Thurland spoke in the high manner that he had. Didn't he say that Haila had rushed off into the sand dunes? Did the Caïd wish to call him a liar? The truth had been told, and no one would be permitted to enter the tent to make a search.

There was a moment of tension when everyone seemed to hold their breath; then the Caïd laughed softly—laughed softly, as if he thought there was a lot of time in the world to settle with my Uncle Thurland. He gave an order to the crowd that muttered angrily behind him; and with him at their head they streamed out across the wastes, their splay feet scattering the sand as they deployed in line formation to search the dunes for Haila.

Thurland stepped into the tent, pulled the blanket from Haila and spoke. "You've got one chance. Crawl through the back of the tent and run."

Haila took the advice. Creeping on all fours, he moved through a stony stretch at the back of the tent and disappeared.

Thurland came to the front of the tent where the rest of us stood waiting—Flane, the wrestler, the hairy man, and I. Anastasia peered out through the flap of the tent.

"And now?" said Flane to his brother.

"We're in for trouble, I think," said Thurland quietly.

"We might have given him up," said Blore. "It would have saved us."

Thurland turned and looked at the hairy man, looked at him with his fierce eyes; and Blore wilted under the look. "No one ever asked a Spillane for sanctuary and was refused," he said softly. "An old dog-fox ran into the cabin of my grandmother when I was a little boy; and she walloped the huntsman, the hounds and the hunters who tried to get it away from her."

"They'll take us prisoners," muttered Ahmed Mansour.

"It's bad luck," said Thurland; "but there was no other way out. We'll wait." He spoke softly to Anastasia, whose eyes showed the great fear that possessed her.

THE Caïd with the three hundred searchers at his heels returned to our tent. The Caïd had a grin upon his face, a grin that told plainly he wasn't pleased with us. He stepped close to

Thurland and fired questions at him. Who were we? What were we doing there? Where were we going, and why?

Thurland answered in the tricky manner that he had when dealing with inquisitive persons. He embroidered the story that he had told the inspector at Marrakech; but this time, in an endeavor to please the Caïd, he made the lost Englishman an enemy of France.

The Caïd considered the answers for a moment; then as he stood, thoughtful, Anastasia appeared at the open flap of the tent. It was the first time the Caïd had seen her, and although her face was veiled so that only her eyes and brow showed, he seemed impressed with the strange wild beauty of her.

The Caïd stared at her in astonishment; then he turned on Thurland. "You must come back to the village," he said, speaking in French. "You must come at once with all your party."

Thurland's fingers were at the holster on his hip, and his eyes blazed as he heard the command. But there were three hundred men with swords and guns around us; and to start a fight would have been madness. We would have been massacred inside five minutes.

"If we refuse?" asked Thurland.

The Caïd grinned. "This is my country," he said. "If you refuse to come to the village, you'll go no further."

CHAPTER XII

Thurland Fights a Duel

WE were prisoners—prisoners of a fierce wild crowd who were whipped into a fury because one of their number had been killed by the dwarf. Prisoners of a Caïd whose eyes turned often to survey Anastasia in the journey from our camp to the village.

The hairy man clucked in a manner that showed his disgust at the situation; Ahmed Mansour frowned at the mob that surrounded us; Flane and Thurland talked in undertones, and the little devils of terror sat in my own heart as we entered the gate of the walled village.

The evening had closed in, but there were torches to light our passage along the narrow lanes which were completely covered with palm fronds, so that they were dark and cool even during the hottest hours of the day. The people swarmed around us, pushing and jostling each other to get a glimpse of us, shrieking questions and answers, so that the noise was deafening. Thurland and Flane walked on either side of Anastasia to save her from the fierce wretches who fought with each other to get close to her. Disloyal I was at that moment to my uncle. I thought of the name that they called him in Glengariff and Kenmare. "Mad Thurland Spillane" he was indeed, and fine proof we who marched with him had of his madness!

AT the end of a *souk* that reeked of the odors of cinnamon, clove, mint and orange-flowers, we came to the house of the Caïd; and one after the other we were pushed through an immense door studded with brass nails. We found ourselves in a passage lighted here and there with a torch. The mob fought to follow us, but they were thrust back by two wild devils who used the decorated butts of their long rifles to bang the faces of the persistent ones.

Along the passage we went, the Caïd and some twenty men around us. The floor was of mud, beaten hard by bare feet through the years. The walls were of an orange tint, and on them hung saddles and bridles for horses and camels, so that the smell of badly tanned leather nearly choked us. Up a ramp to a floor above, moving swiftly now; then another nail-studded door was thrust open, and without ceremony we were pushed into a big room that was without windows, the air entering by openings just below the ceiling, openings that were fifteen feet from the floor. A man stuck a torch in an iron ring, stepped out and shouted orders.

Half-naked men arrived with a bale of mats, another of carpets. They tossed them onto the floor. Three others entered, and demanded in the name of the Caïd all weapons that we carried. Thurland considered the request for a moment, then handed over his revolver. The others followed his example. The men backed out and slammed the door. We heard the big bolt shoot home with a loud clang.

Thurland had the two hands of Anastasia in his own. He was whispering softly to her, trying to chase the fear from her face. The rest of us stood together looking at the door. The suddenness of the business brought a sort of mental paralysis upon us. Three hours before, we had been free people on a great adventure; now we were prisoners in the house of this chief of a murderous crew of ruffians.

Flane spoke, addressing his brother. "What will come out of this?" he asked. "If it's to hold us for ransom, we'll have a long wait. If we were French, the Government might buy us out of the hole; but in the whole history of Ireland there was never a cent paid to free an Irishman."

Ahmed Mansour made a few remarks in Arabic that were certainly not prayers.

"We should have given them the dwarf," began the hairy man. "If they don't find him, we'll—"

My Uncle Thurland interrupted him with a quick motion of his hand. "That's enough," he snapped. "We couldn't give up the dwarf. What will happen to us, I don't know, but we're not dead yet. Scared, Jimmy?"

"Yes," I answered. "I'm awful scared."

"This will teach you a lesson," said Thurland. "When you get back to the Green Tree Farm, stay there and grow potatoes."

"I will," I said. "That is, if I ever do get back."

"You'll get home," said Thurland. "Things don't look bright this evening, but they might change at any moment. I have a hunch that they will."

A portion of our own provisions was brought to us, and we sat on the mats and ate, with no great appetite. The big bare room was full of dancing shadows thrown by the flickering torch. It burned down to the iron ring; then the stub of it dropped to the floor, to be stamped out by Ahmed Mansour. We were in a soft gloom that lightened as the moon rose, the light coming in through the openings close to the roof.

We lay upon the mats and carpets, waiting for the morning. We couldn't sleep. Africa seemed a terrible place to me that night. . . .

It was hardly daylight when the door swung open and the Caïd stepped into the room. Thurland was standing up; the rest of us were sitting on the mats. The Caïd, arrogant and smiling, addressed my uncle. What he said, he speaking French, I did not know at the moment, but I learned later—learned by scraps that came to me from the talk between Flane and Thurland and Anastasia, and the clucking of the hairy man.

The face of Thurland as he listened to the Caïd told me that whatever the proposition was, it wasn't pleasing. Not pleasing at all! For the red of temper appeared under the tan on my uncle's face, and his eyes blazed. Just for an

instant I thought he would spring at the Caïd, but he controlled the sinewy hands that itched to get at the fellow's throat.

This, in a few words, was the proposal of the Caïd: We were free to go forward, on one condition. The Caïd had taken a fancy to Anastasia, and we could clear out as fast as we liked, if Anastasia would stay behind.

For a minute Thurland stood looking at the man who made the proposition; then he turned and walked toward Anastasia. He put his arm around her waist and stood with his back turned to the Caïd. A frightful silence came into the room, a silence that choked the clucking of the hairy man. A dozen faces watched from the doorway, fierce, cruel faces that found pleasure in our distress.

The Caïd commenced to speak, but Thurland wheeled on him, and stopped him with a word.

The Caïd spoke to the men at the door. They sprang back and opened another door immediately opposite. With a wave of his hand, the Caïd invited Thurland and the rest of us to step forward and examine the place.

In my dreams for all time I will see that room into which we stepped with faltering feet. Night after night it has swung into my sleep, and my eyes have run along the cursed implements that hung upon its walls. For in that room were the most dreadful things for torturing people that the mind of man could conceive.

They hung there, one after the other. Each was designed to produce its particular brand of agony. The tall snaky Caïd had a Torquemada-like passion for

inflicting pain, and he had collected every article that could be used for that purpose—every cruel device designed by maniacs to torture flesh.

Cunningly made and devised were those articles, the sight of which produced a strange upsetting of the stomach.

A breath of hell came from them, for they had been used, and lately too; and it was that visible evidence of use that stirred Thurland Spillane. Stirred the hot Irish blood of him, so that he turned and spat his wrath in the face of the devil who had us in his power.

THE exact words Thurland used I cannot tell here, he using French to address the Caïd; but I heard the rough translations later. Words with a thorn in them. Words that bit and pricked at the dark hide of the fellow. For my uncle had a lash to his tongue, so that men grew mad under his insults. This is what I heard he said:

"Is it this you spend your life at?" he asked the Caïd. "Pinching and burning poor wretches that are in your power! A fine dirty devil you are, with no one bold enough to wipe the grin off your face with his fist. Listen to me, you small Satan of the wastes! I'll fight you in any way you like, fists, swords or pistols; and if you beat me, the lady stays here with you. If I beat you, we go free with our camels and provisions. Be a man for once in your life, and meet a man on equal terms!" And as my uncle said that, he hit the Caïd with the back of his hand in the mouth. Hit him that hard that it brought blood.

The men who were around the Caïd sprang at Thurland, and there was a fine chance that he would be trussed up and tortured there and then; but their chief stopped them. The lash in my uncle's tongue had bit deep into the pride of the fellow, and he was stirred in a way that was unusual to him. The courage of Thurland had startled him, no man ever having dared to slap him in the mouth; and he was wondering how he could wipe out the insult, wipe it out in such a way as to gain the respect of the men around him who had seen the blow struck, and who were astonished at the cool nerve and impudence of Thurland Spillane.

Cunning was Thurland. He had chosen the only way by which we could obtain our liberty, the only way in which Anastasia could be saved from the Caïd.

"You shall fight me!" shouted the Caïd. "And it shall be as you wish. If you beat me, you and your companions shall be free; but there is small chance! I shall spit you and give your body to the dogs of the village. We will fight with swords. Does that suit you?"

"Swords or fists or guns," cried Thurland; and there was a grin on his face as he spoke. For to Thurland Spillane, a fight was what meat and drink are to most men; and the fact that he had baited the fellow into the proposal he put forward, delighted him immensely.

On a cleared space in the center of the village there was a platform on which wrestling matches were held; and it was there that the fight was to take place. There in the blazing sunshine, with every man, woman and child in the place to watch it! And we were led out in single file to see Thurland die, for that is what the guards said to us as they pushed us through the crowds. Ahmed Mansour translated to us what they said.

It seemed that the Caïd had been for years a pupil of a French marquis who lived at Taroudant, and who was the finest swordsman that France had seen for years. He had been run out of Paris for killing three men who were fools enough to challenge him, he having been paid by cowards to bait them with insults, and they, not knowing of his skill, agreeing to a meeting.

The marquis had come to Morocco, and at Taroudant he had opened a school for anyone who wished to learn swordsmanship. And the greatest pupil that he had ever had, so said the guards that led us to the square, was the Caïd who was meeting Thurland. For the Caïd had often held the marquis to a draw in a hot bout, and when he liked to exert himself a little, he could beat him.

Cheerful news for us whose safety depended on Thurland's blade! I walked beside Anastasia, and her hands were cold with dread as I touched them.

WE were pushed up close to the platform, there to await the arrival of the Caïd. And in that interval Thurland whispered to Anastasia, comforting her and telling her not to be afraid. My Uncle Flane was nervous, but Thurland was his laughing devil-may-care self.

The Caïd arrived, stripped except for a pair of shorts. He climbed onto the platform, and a man handed up two beautiful swords. Flane said in a whisper that they were like French cavalry swords, but he thought they were longer in the blade, and heavier.

Said Flane: "I wish they were lighter. If those blades weigh an ounce, they weigh three pounds. It will be hard for Thurland if the fight is long."

"It mightn't be," I stammered. "Uncle Thurland might whip him quickly."

Thurland kissed Anastasia, then he put one hand on the edge of the platform, and although it was as high as his chin, he leaped so that he landed with his two feet upon it and stood erect. A great leap! Those eyes of his, so like guards on a castle wall, were blazing, and his face was pale under the tan, but he was quite cool. And the crowd milled around, muttering and grunting, they sensing that murder was in the air.

"You shall fight me!" shouted the Caïd. "If you beat me, you and your companions shall be free; but there is small chance! I shall give your body to the dogs of the village!"

Thurland stripped off his leather coat and his vest; then with an angry jerk he pulled his shirt over his head. And when the crowd saw his chest and arms, they grunted in chorus. White and clean-skinned was he, and the muscles on his body were like ropes of fine steel that rippled beneath his skin as he moved, rippled like startled snakes beneath a tissue of satin.

A strange picture he made beside the dark Caïd. More snaky was the Caïd, as strong as Thurland and perhaps stronger, but his strength hidden on account of the color of his skin. But his arms were something to look at—long and powerful, the arms of a swordsman.

Thurland and the Moor stood back and regarded each other; then without a word from anyone, they threw themselves on guard and the fight was on. And the crowd that had been whispering and pushing, became as silent as mice. The only sound was the slithering noise made by the bare feet of the two of them as they circled. But this I knew: the Caïd saw in the swift movements of Thurland that it wasn't the first time that my uncle had handled a sword. There came into the black eyes of the man a look of new cunning and watchfulness.

Thurland, and this information also came from Flane, was of a different school of fencing, standing on guard like the Italians, his legs farther apart, his left shoulder nearly hidden, so that he exposed but a small mark on the blade of the other.

The Caïd, however, fought in the manner of the French.

Never was such a fight seen in that heat-stricken country. Never! A big man was the Caïd, standing fully six feet; and although he had weight, he moved with the lightness of a squirrel on a branch. And his hand, so big and strong, handled the sword in a way that was surprising. At one instant he would hold it so loosely that you would think that it would drop from his fingers, but the next instant he would grip it so tight that you'd think he would leave his fingermarks on the steel. For it is by this change of grip, which men who know call "fingering," that a man becomes great as a fencer.

The Caïd flung himself at Thurland, and from his lips came an Arab war-cry that was fashioned to frighten the man he was fighting, but it had no effect on Thurland. He parried the attack in a way that seemed to puzzle the other.

The Caïd was yelling now —yelling like a madman as he cut and slashed, Thurland parrying for all he was worth. "Thurl will get him!" gasped Flane.

Straight and beautiful he stood up to the fierce attack of the Moor, giving ground when he had to, but fighting back when for the slightest second the attack weakened. The hits and the thrusts I cannot describe, for I knew nothing of the game at the time, being young and unused to sword battles. But this I do know, and I learned it from the strained faces of those around me, that no man in the crowd ever saw such a fight.

The flashing of their blades in the sunshine blinded us as we watched; and always and always there was the wicked snaky body of the Caïd boring in, and always and always the white muscular body of Thurland ready for him, puzzling him with the beautiful wrist-work that foiled him each time he lunged.

Anastasia couldn't look at it. She turned away her face; then as the fight went on, she seemed to have a weakness on her, for she put her head down on my shoulder and sobbed softly, taking no notice of my whispered words when I told her Thurland was holding his own.

"Tell her," gasped Flane, leaning over, "tell her Thurland is the better man! He will tire him and sweep him off the platform when the time comes! It's Thurl that will show him!"

The voice of Flane was strange, his words glued together with excitement.

I told Anastasia what Flane had said, but she didn't seem to hear. Her sobs were louder, and I was afraid that in the little intervals of silence when the two men drew back a bit from each other, Thurland would hear her and be upset. Not once did his eyes turn in her direction, from the moment he sprang upon the platform, there being little chance for him to look at anything except the weaving figure that danced and skipped before him.

The Caïd was losing his temper now. The memories of his bouts with the fine French marquis were rising up in his mind, and asking why he wasn't prodding holes in the Irishman who stood in front

of him. For it is, as my Uncle Thurland once said, the pride brought by a first win that often makes us lose the second fight. "If I," thought the Caïd, and you could nearly feel what he was thinking, "if I held a master duelist to a draw, and now and then beat him by a margin, why can't I prick the skin of this fellow?" And thinking that, he shook himself together and whirled his blade so that the eye couldn't follow it.

BUT Thurland was there, cool and watchful. Suddenly by a cunning twist he turned the blade of the Moor; his sword ran forward like a hissing snake, and pricked the dark skin of the fellow above the midriff. A fleck of blood showed immediately, and a massed cry of wonder came from the crowd.

I thought the Caïd would stop then, but that prick from the sword-point only made him angry. That was something that he hadn't expected, and the temper that was on him before, was nothing to what gripped him then. He drove Thurland across the platform with a rain of blows. It seemed as if the Moor were flinging science to the wind and depending on a wild rally to finish the business, for sword-fighting is like fist-fighting, and a man forgets all that he knows of technique when temper masters him.

The Caïd was yelling now—yelling like a madman as he cut and slashed, Thurland parrying for all that he was worth. The fury of the assault brought cries from the crowd.

"It's all right!" gasped Flane. "Tell her! Tell her! He can't keep that up! Thurl will get him! He will! He will."

I cried the words of Flane into the ears of Anastasia, trying to make her believe what I didn't believe myself; for I, watching the devilish manner in which the Caïd followed my uncle, couldn't see how Thurland could win.

And then the end came, with a suddenness that choked the yelps of the crowd—choked them as if the very happening had a thousand invisible fingers that snapped a bit of catgut around each yelling throat and pulled it tight. That's how it seemed to me.

The Caïd had lunged with all his force, but the white body he aimed at was not there. Not there at all! And as he tried to recover, seeing the danger he was in, Thurland sprang forward and drove his point through the left shoulder of the attacker. The sword fell from the Caïd's fingers, and he reeled backward.

"Agh! It was what he was waiting for!" screamed Flane; and I patted the shoulder of Anastasia and tried, with tears running out of my eyes, to tell her that Thurland had won.

Flane and the hairy man lifted Thurland from the platform while a hundred men were around the Caïd, shouting and cursing. Although the Caïd had made the bargain—and they had thought it a good bargain—it was only because they were so sure of his ability to beat Thurland that they looked forward with joy to the fight. Now with the chief on the ground, they thought different.

Anastasia flung her arms about the bare body of Thurland, and kissed him and kissed him again. And not a word did he say. Not a word of brag or bluster, but he stood like a child while Flane put his shirt over his head and drew him back into the shade of some huts, where he wouldn't be in full view of the crowd. For there was a sort of ugliness upon the crowd now.

"I'm in doubt if this will finish it," growled Flane.

"Why?" asked Thurland.

"He'll get mad with us," said Flane.

Thurland was quiet for a moment; then he spoke. "He will keep his word," he said slowly. "He is too good a fighter to quit. I'll go over and speak to him."

And although the men around the Caïd looked black with temper as Thurland approached, my uncle pushed his way to the side of the Caïd, who was now lying on a heap of cushions that had been brought for him. And in French, Thurland spoke to him, telling him that he was sorry that he was hurt, and how good a fighter he was.

And the Caïd smiled and shook Thurland's hand—shook it and called him a good swordsman. And although he was faint from loss of blood, he told his men to give us all that we wanted, camels and dates and water; then, turning to Thurland, he asked if he might say good-by to Anastasia.

THURLAND came back, took the hand of Anastasia and led her forward to the Caïd. She was sobbing, her big eyes blurred with tears.

The Caïd made a little speech telling her of his regret that he didn't win her, for he, like most native people, didn't consider Anastasia's point of view at all—he in his pride thinking she would be perfectly contented to stay with him if

he had won the fight. It made Thurland grin; for he knew what would have happened if the Caïd had killed Thurland and held Anastasia by force.

CHAPTER XIII

We See the Slave Runners

STRANGE was our departure from that village with its tinted walls. Stern and silent were the people who stood and watched us. Their creed of life was to pillage and kill the persons weaker than themselves, and that fine belief had been upset by Thurland's battle with the Caïd.

Their eyes showed the bewilderment that was upon them, and they whispered with each other in an effort to find reasons. Camels that they desired greatly were going away from them, camels and provisions and arms. And there were a few of them who, like the Caïd, were attracted by the springing slimness of Anastasia, so different from their own ladies, who were fed on milk and meal to bring them to a marriageable fatness.

Southward into the glare of the morning we rode—silent, because words, when they formed together in our minds, seemed stupid, lacking altogether in the power to express our thoughts.

We passed the place where we had been taken prisoner, and thoughts of the singing dwarf came into our minds. The face of Thurland softened as he recalled the poor devil's description of his wife's beauty, and the manner in which he had been received. He looked at Anastasia and grinned.

"Wonder where he is?" he laughed, and his question broke the queer silence that had rested on us.

The hairy man gave his opinion that Haila would steer straight southward, thinking that we would catch up to him if we kept to the trail that we intended to follow. The hairy man was confident that the dwarf could keep alive in the wastes. He was a desert rat, capable of finding sufficient nourishment where an ordinary man would starve.

The hairy man had a thousand stories to tell of men who had escaped death by a narrow margin in the wastes—stories that he told in a sing-song voice. He had been lost on five different occasions, and had suffered terribly. Once himself and another had opened the veins in the neck of the camel and had drunk the blood of the living beast; and on another occasion when a camel had given up the ghost, they had taken the store of water from the dead animal's stomach. A cheerful devil was the hairy man, full of frightening stories.

Possibly it was the fear that the Caïd would change his mind that kept us moving on that eventful day. We didn't wish to make camp. On and on, over a stony plain, we went through the hot hours of the afternoon.

There was not a sign of life: no animals of any kind, no birds. We saw one insect. At a stop made necessary by the slipping bags on a camel, we saw a scorpion. Ahmed Mansour had a small circular bit of looking-glass about two inches across, and he annoyed the scorpion by placing this in front of the insect and watching the antics of the wicked thing, who thought he was up against an enemy as big and ugly as himself. Again and again the scorpion lashed the bit of glass with his tail.

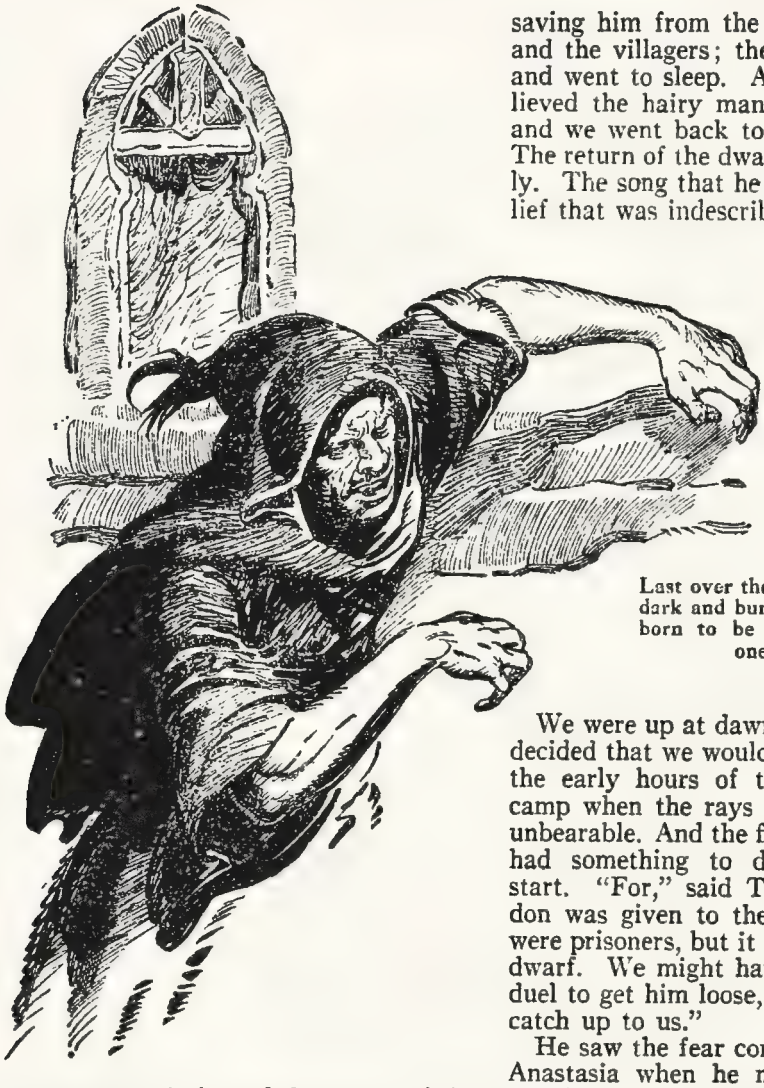
We traveled at the rate of three miles an hour, and we were tired and thirsty when we made camp in a depression in the plain where there was a small patch of dried grass that the camels could eat. The atmosphere was so dry that sparks came from our hair when we combed it. Eerie was that place—when the night wind came up, it played sad tunes on every bit of canvas it could find, tunes that fought the horrible silence.

IT was Anastasia who was the first to hear the song. She cried out to Thurland, and the rest of us sat up and listened. The hairy man, who was acting as guard for the early part of the night, had fallen asleep from weariness, and Flane shook him awake.

Standing outside the tents we listened. The song came up on the wind from the southward; and for a few minutes, what with the noise we made, we could not distinguish the words. Suddenly the hairy man unloosed a cry of joy and rushed out across the plain, shouting.

"It's Haila!" he screamed. "It's Haila singing the song of the 'Woman with Golden Feet!'"

The hairy man was right. It was Haila singing the strange thrilling song. Our ears drank it in, for in the thick blackness it seemed a magical chant; and although we knew that it was the dwarf singing it, there came a little fear lest some spirit of the waste was fooling us by chanting it in an effort to lure us to destruction. For the night had a



Last over the wall came a big man, dark and burly. If ever a man was born to be a killer, it was that one-eyed Moor.

strange terror in it, and the events of the day had left our nerves raw and jumpy.

Ahmed Mansour had followed the hairy man across the wastes, and we built up the fire so they could find the camp again. Thurland, Flane, Anastasia and I stood by the fire waiting; now and then a shout from the hairy man came back to us, but the shout didn't reach the ears of the singer, on account of the wind blowing in our direction.

"The dwarf is a mile away," said Flane. "You can hear the ticking of a watch fifty yards off. They won't be back for an hour."

Flane was right. It was a full hour before the hairy man and Ahmed Mansour returned, the wrestler carrying the poor dwarf on his back.

Haila was weary, but he was quite cheerful. After he had drank a quart of scalding coffee, he thanked Thurland for saving him from the anger of the Caïd and the villagers; then he fell on a rug and went to sleep. Ahmed Mansour relieved the hairy man from guard duty, and we went back to our own blankets. The return of the dwarf cheered us greatly. The song that he sang brought a belief that was indescribable.

We were up at dawn, Thurland having decided that we would march on through the early hours of the day and make camp when the rays of the sun became unbearable. And the finding of the dwarf had something to do with the early start. "For," said Thurland, "the pardon was given to the bunch of us that were prisoners, but it wasn't given to the dwarf. We might have to fight another duel to get him loose, if the Caïd should catch up to us."

He saw the fear come into the face of Anastasia when he made that remark, and he flung his arms around her and kissed her. "Don't fear," he said. "We will not be harmed. Didn't I tell you that the wise woman at El Kantara saw me with the Masque of Death in my hands, though she didn't know that I was hunting for it at the time? And if she saw me with it, how can I be killed before I get my hands on it?"

But the fear stayed with Anastasia—fighting the words that Thurland fired at her in an effort to cheer her up. . . .

We passed three mud huts that morning. The people saw us coming and rushed inside, barring the doors behind them. A goat was left bleating in the sunshine, and we wanted the goat. We beat at the door and shouted to the owners, telling them that we would pay a good price for the animal, but we got no answer. Instead, a knife was thrust through a crack in the wall and nearly

gashed the face of the hairy man, who was trying to look into the interior at the moment.

Ahmed Mansour wanted to take the goat without bothering to speak to the owners, but my Uncle Thurland wouldn't let him, so we rode on. Half a mile beyond, we looked back. The hut dwellers were outside now, watching us; but the moment Flane turned his camel as if to go back, they dashed inside again, banging the doors behind them.

A weird strange land, this, through which we were moving, a land of terror, a dead land! "The Moors," said Ahmed Mansour, trying to explain the country, "only wish to see two things in movement: running water and running French soldiers. All else they wish to rest as it is."

We made camp an hour before midday. Thurland and Flane and the hairy man studied the maps. We were beyond the Draa in a line with Cap Juby, and twenty-eight degrees north of the equator. The dwarf, Haila, who had journeyed farther south when he was younger, assured my uncles that we would reach a small oasis in the morning. There we would be able to buy provisions.

IT was nearly five o'clock in the afternoon when we saw the camel caravan. Ahmed Mansour was the first to catch sight of it, and when he pointed to it we thought that it was a mirage. Moving eastward between us and the horizon, was a snaky line for all the world like an enormous serpent moving in a cloud of yellow dust.

"Camels!" cried Ahmed.

My uncles were standing together, staring at the far-off line. There was something sinister in that line.

"Raiders," muttered Flane.

Thurland had the glasses on the moving serpent, and he nodded as he handed them to his brother. "They've got prisoners," he said. "Scores of them! We're lucky. If we were camped a mile ahead, we might have joined the chain-gang. Lucky they can't see us. The big dune hides us, and the sun is in their eyes. All the same, we had better get back a little."

Hurriedly we moved into a mass of rocks; and there, crouched on our knees we watched the company of raiders. Flane passed the glasses to Anastasia, who passed them to me. With the glasses we could clearly see the captives walking on foot, whipped along by the camel-riders.

The head of the enormous serpent moved over the edge of the plain: camels and captives. It pulled its tail after it; the glasses showed only a cloud of dust made golden by the rays of the setting sun.

And as we watched the dust-cloud, our thoughts upon the poor wretches that were whipped along by the raiders, we got a surprise. From the rocks behind us came a sound of convulsive sobbing; and when we turned quickly, a girl of some twenty years, completely nude, rose from the shelter of a boulder and came toward us.

It was to Anastasia that she ran—Anastasia into whose big eyes had come all the pity of the world as they fell upon that naked dusty figure.

In an instant Anastasia had pulled the crying girl into the tent, while we swung our faces to the dust-cloud, looking for a raider to come in pursuit of the escaped slave. And a hatred of the camel-train was upon us at that moment, a hatred of it and the country where it was possible to traffic in flesh and blood.

My uncles swore softly, and the hairy man clucked. Ahmed Mansour and the dwarf looked from time to time at the flap of the tent through which the girl had disappeared; and although I was young, I didn't wonder. For the quick glimpse that they had of the girl showed them that she was beautiful.

"They'll miss her when they make camp," said Flane. "She's too darned pretty to escape without anyone noticing it."

Thurland took the glasses and turned them on the golden dust-cloud. "They've missed her already," he said. "There's her owner riding back on the trail."

In the minutes that followed, we learned that the girl had broke from the caravan at a point directly in line with our position, although she had not seen the tents. She had run madly in search of shelter, and by pure luck had entered the rocky gully at one end of which was our camp.

Together we watched the lone rider coming over the plain. He followed the track of the caravan, riding fast as if trying to pick up the tracks of the girl before the night fell.

WE lost sight of him after he passed the point where we had first seen the raiders appear on the horizon, and we breathed a sigh of relief as he disappeared. The night was coming down on

the desert, and now it would be difficult to find the spot where the girl had broken away from the mob of prisoners. Thurland gave this opinion to the dwarf, and the dwarf translated it to the girl, who had now come out of the tent, dressed in a loose gown that Anastasia had put around her body.

"They've been cruel to her," said Anastasia. "The marks of a whip are on her back and legs."

"The devils," growled Thurland. "The hellish devils!"

We sat in the dusk, fearful to light a fire lest it might bring the camel-rider down upon us. The girl sat close to Anastasia, clinging to her dress as if the very touch of her robe would bring protection. I know that all of us were thinking of that enormous serpent made of camels and slaves that had passed before us like something seen in a nightmare. Africa was exposing herself to us!

"There are fools," said Flane quietly, "who talk about the conquest of Africa. They blabber in London and Paris of how the continent is opened up. They made me sick. Africa is the place where the devil thinks out all his tricks, and it'll be a vast secret to the whites at the end of another thousand years. Yes, and at the end of another ten thousand! For one of these days they'll push us—"

MY Uncle Flane halted there and for a good reason. Down on us like a specter rushed a plush-footed camel, right into the midst of the group; and while we scattered before the rush of the beast, the rider slipped from his saddle and ran toward the girl, his sword waving to keep us at a distance.

It was Ahmed Mansour who stopped the rush of the big brute who had ridden in on us. Throwing himself nearly flat, to dodge the waving sword, the wrestler flung out his right leg and kicked the Moor violently in the shins. The big fellow went down; the sword flew out of his hands; and before he could get to his knees, Ahmed Mansour was on him with the leap of an enraged panther. He caught him with a crotch hold, lifted him into the air. For a second he balanced himself; then he hurled the Moor head-foremost against the rocks.

The slaver lay where he fell. Thurland walked quietly to his side, turned him over and felt his heart. The fellow was dead.

"There were four bald-headed vultures following us all the day," clucked the hairy man. "Now I know what for."

"We'll strike camp," said Thurland. "It would be madness to stay here."

While we were getting things ready, the Arab spoke to Flane in an undertone as if he was making an apology for killing the slaver. "We had to have another camel for the girl," he said.

Flane didn't answer. We moved off into the velvety night. Southward, ever southward, to the place where the Woman with Golden Feet waited for fools. We were silent and a little depressed.

CHAPTER XIV

The Beleaguered Village

WE made camp in the morning at the edge of what must have been a dried-up salt marsh, for the sun glistened on the particles of salt so that you couldn't look at it. And the four bald-headed vultures were there with six mates that they had picked up somewhere in the night.

The hairy man and the dwarf set out for a village that was on the other side of the salt marsh. They had the intention of riding to within a half kilometer of the place; then the hairy man would creep into the *souk* and buy the food that we wanted. The vultures watched them go, looked at each other for a few seconds, then decided to stay in camp.

My Uncle Flane thought that the birds were watching one of the camels. The Moors think that a vulture knows days and days before the death of a camel that the beast is going to die. The bird watches the walk of the camel the way a fighter at the finish of a round turns and watches the legs of his antagonist as he goes back to his corner. If the legs wabble, it's a great sign.

We sat in the little patches of shade and waited for the hairy man and the dwarf; and Africa boiled and blazed in the cruel heat—boiled and blazed with the dry bare belly of her stretched to the sun. The mind reeled as one pictured it: the great distances, without shelter or water. Our eyes turned southward pictured them: the Rio de Oro, Senegal, French Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, Dahomey, Nigeria, the Congo, and the great strip of wild land running down to the Cape.

"And the whole damned lot of it hasn't the value of an inch of Kerry," said Flane suddenly.

"What's not worth an inch of Kerry?" asked Thurland.

"You know," snapped Flane.

Thurland laughed, and threw a rock at the vultures. The stone passed within a foot of one of them, but he didn't move. He croaked softly to a companion, a croak that might have been a curse thrown at Thurland.

The hairy man and the dwarf didn't come back till late in the afternoon. They came at a fast trot, and the moment they pulled up, they started to scream out the news. With the two of them talking at once, we could not understand a word; but Thurland silenced the dwarf, and the hairy man got the floor.

There was, so the hairy one told us, the devil of a fuss immediately ahead of us. The village to which they had gone was partly surrounded by a crowd of robbers and pillagers that had come up from the southward. The raiding mob had stolen every camel they could lay their hands on, and now they intended to sack the village and carry away the young women. It was, in the Moorish language, a *baroud,* and a terrible one.

"We can swing away to the eastward," said Thurland. "Isn't it possible?"

The hairy man shook his head. It appeared that the road southward passed through a narrow defile with steep cliffs on either side, and the marauders held this defile with hundreds of armed men, so that we hadn't a chance of getting through unless we paid thousands and thousands of francs for permission.

"And that, because I'm Irish, I'm not going to do," said Thurland. "The Irish don't pay for roadway."

"The sheik of the village is friendly," said the hairy man. "He's so frightened that he'd like to talk to anyone that hates the robbers. I went in and spoke to him." The hairy one waited for a minute, his eyes upon Thurland; then he added in a weak voice: "I told him of you. I told of your fight with the Caïd."

Thurland grinned, he being amused by the bragging of the hairy man. He walked apart with Flane, the two of them standing in the hot sunshine, their faces turned to the south.

NOW I think that the madness—for it was a madness—came upon my two uncles on that afternoon—came upon them as they talked together, considering the story told by the hairy man. Up to that moment they had, taking consideration of their ancestry, exercised a certain amount of caution in their movements; but from that afternoon on, they considered neither their safety nor the safety of those that were with them. They had one thought only in their minds, and that was to get to that spot in the terrible wastes where the Woman with Golden Feet watched over the Caravan Treasure, the plunder of the ages. They were taken up by the glamour and the wonder of the story, and nothing else mattered. Nothing at all.

They were in a world apart. A sort of frightening ambition was upon them, and logic was thrown to the winds. Possibly all men who have done wonderful things since the world began have been victims of this same mad ambition. It creeps into their heads on some fine day, strangling all the other little desires. If the man loves play, it strangles that love; if he loves drink, it does the same. It throttles his liking for books and horses, and if women are in the way of the dream, the desire is pinched and pinched till it dies the death.

It is then that the ambition flames. He is in labor to it, like the great Marco Polo, who had Cathay in his head. Like the great Franklin, who could think of nothing but the Northwest Passage. Like Mungo Park, who lost his life in trying to find whether the River Niger ran to the west or the east. Like brave Scott, who got to the Pole and died coming back with his fine companions about him.

SO my uncles Thurland and Flane became like those others on that afternoon by the edge of the dried salt marsh. The thing in their minds screamed for birth, and they forgot everything else. Even Anastasia, whom Thurland loved with a great love, was forgotten in the business of getting delivery of the desire they had bred. And Africa grinned at them and encouraged them—blew her hot breath on their madness, and flung up pictures of what they would do when the swaddling-thing of the devil was in their arms. . . .

The dusk came down on the sprawling body of Africa then; as the night thickened, little pinpoints of light broke through the darkness in front of us—miles in front of us. They were the watch-fires of the looters who were camped around the village. Hundreds of them! They ran like a chain of yellow topazes across the night, warning us that we couldn't pass. And Thurland and Flane stood and cursed them.

"Can we get into the village?" Thurland asked of the hairy man.

"If you move at once," said the hairy one. "In the morning it will be too late."

"It's our one chance," said Thurland. "Let's go."

WE circled the dried-up swamp, the hairy man and the dwarf leading us. The winking watchfires were plainer now. And the light from the coming moon showed us the defile that was blocked from us, the great steep cliffs making it impossible for us to go to the westward or the eastward of it.

The high mud walls of the village rose before us. The hairy man slipped from his camel and crept forward on all fours. We waited in the shadows till he came back and whispered the news to Thurland.

"They have ringed the place except for a few yards at the bottom of the *souk*," he said. "If we have luck, we can get through before they block us."

We pushed forward toward the walls. Guns were cracking now. The people in the village were firing from towers that were set at different points along the walls, and the robbers by the camp-fires were firing back. And from out of the village came yells and screams and shouted orders.

Once more the hairy one went forward on all fours. He came back hurriedly and whispered to us. We were to make a quick dash for a closed door in the walls; and if Allah was kind, we would reach it without a bit of lead in our bodies. The door would swing open the moment we reached it. He had arranged a signal.

Still on our camels, we reached the edge of the danger zone; then at a word from Thurland we charged the wall where the gate showed a blacker mass than the rest of the tinted mud barrier.

Bullets whizzed around us. The camel of the dwarf went headlong, screaming as it fell. The dwarf picked himself up, grabbed at the stirrup of Flane's saddle and swung there. The cries and yells increased. Thurland shouted encouragement. He was riding beside Anastasia, urging her mount forward.

The great wooden door swung open as we reached the wall. In a shouldering rush we swept through it, knocking over a dozen villagers who couldn't get out of the way of the frightened and angry camels, that bit and kicked at everyone within reach. A mad entry! The clamor was deafening. A craziness brought by the fear of death had clutched the people; they howled in chorus, and the narrow lanes were so packed with men and women and goats and sheep and camels that once inside, we could hardly move.

But the hairy man had spread some wild tale about Thurland Spillane that brought us a passage. With flaming torches lighting the way, and with a thousand people shouting at us, we were led toward the house of the sheik. Never did I hear such an uproar. From the yells and screams I imagined that the people thought Thurland had come to deliver them from the plunderers; and looking at my uncle as he rode at the head of the line, I could well understand why they thought so. Huge and kingly was Thurland in the flickering light of the torches, full of a confidence that he had built up to feed the longing that was in his soul—the longing to see the Woman with Golden Feet.

Through the packed streets, from which rose a stench of men and beasts, we reached the house of the sheik. We were pulled from our camels and pushed within, I clinging to the hand of Anastasia, who watched Thurland with fear in her fine eyes. On a sort of dais covered with sheepskins sat the sheik of the village, a small fat man who was gray with terror. He had drawn his legs up under him so that he looked like a round ball, and he rocked himself backward and forward as messages came to him about the work of the looters outside the walls.

THURLAND and Flane, shoulder to shoulder, each taller than any other man in the place, walked toward the sheik, who looked at them with a sort of reverence in his eyes. And the men around him bowed to my two uncles, and the people outside in the street yelled. Then and there we understood: the hairy man had traded on a prophecy made by an old woman in the village. Years before, she had foretold that two white men who were tall and strong would come down from the north and save the village when it was attacked by robbers—and here were the men! Big and strong, without a doubt, and filled with a courage that was born of a mad desire, a courage that made them invincible.

Cool were Thurland and Flane. With a calm that was surprising, they took charge of things. The sheik was left to rock backward and forward on his sheepskins, while my uncles talked with men

who looked like fighters, men with wicked eyes and hard sinewy hands.

Thurland and Flane and the hairy man and Ahmed Mansour began to pick and choose among the men of the village. Here and there they pulled a man out of the mob and placed him in line. The women and the children were pushed inside the houses, and the street cleared.

Anastasia and the slave girl, whose name was Chema, were taken into the house of the sheik, but I watched my uncles—watched and wondered at the effect they had on the frightened people. For courage came out of Thurland and Flane, a flood of it that pounded on the fears and killed them. A courage that straightened the backs of the men and brought the lust to kill into their eyes. And that was the miracle of the night—the miracle that was brought by the madness for treasure. For my uncles didn't care a tinker's dam for the lives of the men, women and children of the village; they only wanted a path southward. . . .

When some hundreds of men had been chosen, they were divided them into four groups: Thurland had one, Flane another, the hairy man the third, and Ahmed Mansour had the fourth; and it was then that they were told of the plan. They were told to put their guns aside, but to carry their poniards. They would drop over the walls instead of leaving by the gates, and like creeping leopards, they would go here and there noiselessly and stab wherever they found a robber off-guard or asleep. Stab hard and silently.

"A lot of them will be sleeping now," said Thurland, "and none will think you have the courage to come out at them. You'll move quietly and alone, each to his own business, for it is the silent manner of your killing that will fool them; and the man who brings me back the greatest number of amulets shall ride with me and shall be the richest man in the country. Let's go."

With my heart threatening to strangle me, I watched them drop over the walls into the darkness. And the village was quiet, the old men, the children and the women whispering together, and the heavy night sat down on the place and brought fears that were indescribable.

I found my way back to the house of the chief and sat with Anastasia—sat there in the dark, and each minute that passed brought running men to tell the sheik what was happening outside the walls of his village. And Anastasia quivered with fear as each runner came in, she thinking of Thurland and the manner he had of taking the lead in any fight that was on. For if anyone in the world loved fighting with a great love, it was my uncle Thurland Spillane. . . .

I left Anastasia and went to the south wall of the village. Men were coming back, one by one; and with others I helped to drag them up over the wall, hoping that each one that came up out of the darkness would be Thurland. The men were quarreling over the number of robbers they had killed, showing each other the amulets and charms that they had taken from them. For the talk of Thurland and the belief that he had come according to the prophecy, had made fine murderers of them; and they had done things that they had never done before, because they lacked the courage.

Thurland and Flane came at last, also the hairy man and Ahmed Mansour; and then the quarreling broke out anew. For a great desire was upon the crowd to go with Thurland. One and all fought for the honor, they thinking that he had some strange magic about him, and this belief being supported by the *gri-gri* man of the village, an old villain who was

quick to see which way the tide was running.

The men who had made the raid fought to get close to Thurland to exhibit the trophies, and they screamed assertions about their bravery. But they were all silenced by a one-eyed man who came last over the wall. A big man, dark of skin and burly, in whose single eye sat death. Yes, death and bloody murder. If ever a man was born to be a killer, it was that one-eyed Moor.

He thrust the others to the right and left, and he faced Thurland, laying down the proofs before him. And although I couldn't see the proofs, I saw the surprise on the face of my uncle.

The Moor was speaking to Thurland in his own tongue. "Many of them had no amulets," he said; "but you can see by looking at these that I killed them."

My Uncle Flane was sitting on the wall some distance away, and Thurland called out to him. "There's a bit of a fighter here," he said. "The beggar cut off their right ears when he found they had no amulets."

Flane laughed. "You'd better take him," he said. "It's a tough country, and we're a long way from your lady love with the golden feet."

So Thurland patted the shoulder of the one-eyed man to show the others that he was the chosen, and the fellow grinned. I was a little afraid of the one-eyed man, because I thought he loved murder for its own sake; but he was a brave fellow, as we found out later.

AT daybreak the robbers were still around the village, but a lot of the swagger had been knocked out of them by the raid in the night. They kept away from the walls, taking cover from the sharpshooters that Thurland and Flane posted at advantageous points.

At midday the robbers showed a white flag, and they sent a man forward to demand a parley. The chief of the gang wished to talk with Thurland.

"It's a trick," said Flane. "Don't go out to him. They think that if they wiped you out, they'd take the village."

"He cannot hurt me," said Thurland. and unarmed, he went out through the main gate of the village, and the chief came forward—a huge man with embroidered robes. The two stood within five yards of each other, the robber shouting his questions, and Thurland replying in a loud voice so that those on the walls heard everything.

In the Temajegh tongue the robber demanded one hundred camels. For that number he would raise the siege and start northward.

Thurland laughed and shook his head.

"Fifty camels!" cried the chief.

"No, nor fifty!" shouted Thurland.

The chief moved closer, and I saw that my Uncle Flane became tense and watchful.

"Give twenty," cried the chief, and there was wild fury on his face.

"No, not one!" replied Thurland; and as he said the words, the chief, mad with temper and forgetful of danger, pulled a dagger from his cloak and rushed.

It was Flane who fired the shot that stopped him—Flane, who had him covered from the moment that the talk began. A great marksman was my Uncle Flane. The bullet passed through the throat of the robber chief, and he fell dead at the feet of Thurland. By a miracle Thurland gained the gate through a hail of bullets.

The fight was on again, the robbers firing volleys from every bit of shelter they could find. But the heart had gone out of them at the death of the chief and the bloody work that had been done in the darkness of the night.

In the late afternoon they commenced to move, streaming northward in a long line. And it was then that the raided became raiders. For the people of the village, on foot and on camels, started after them like a swarm of hornets; and whenever a robber lagged behind, he was butchered.

The night came down, but the villagers clung to the line; and every now and then a man would come back triumphant, carrying a rifle and the robes of the man he had killed. A few brought back camels. They bragged of their deeds, so that the clamor was frightful; and there were fights over the rifles and the clothing—tremendous fights. And Africa listened: Africa that bred the hate and the cruelty.

CHAPTER XV

In the Hut of the One-Eyed Man

THE one-eyed man who had won the right to go along with us was a clever fellow. On the morning following the departure of the raiders he begged my uncles to walk with him to a house in the village.

"And why?" asked Thurland.

The man stood on one leg and then on the other, a little bashful before the keen eyes of Thurland Spillane.

"There is, in the house I live in," began the man, speaking in his own tongue, "the woman who has made the prophecy of your coming. She wishes to see you and to mark the road that your feet will tread. And in the house is a picture that you might like to see."

"I know where I'm going," said Thurland. "The track is marked."

"In the desert there are no marks," said the man softly. "The jinn of the waste wipe them out with their hot breaths."

"Let's see her," said Flane. "She made a clever guess about our coming." And he laughed when he said that.

SO the one-eyed Moor led the way; my uncles and I followed. The morning sun hit the mud huts; they cracked with the fierce heat of it so that you could hear the noises as you shuffled along the narrow lanes. And in the cracks were little green lizards that flashed in the sun. From the dark doorways men and women cried out to Thurland, thinking him a savior.

The one-eyed man dived into a dark doorway and we followed, feeling our way in the gloom. The man spoke to some one whom we couldn't see, and we were led through the first room to one in the rear that was lighted by a single window. Here sat the old woman, rocking herself backward and forward on a stool.

When Thurland came into the room, she had made an attempt to stand up, but she was too old. She was the oldest woman I have ever seen. Her age came out from her and pushed against her so that we were a little afraid.

The one-eyed man spread a mat on the dirt floor, and we sat down upon it. The old woman looked at Thurland, her eyes blinking like those of an owl; then she signaled to the Moor.

He brought into the room a calabash of clear water, a bunch of fennel and a white rooster. The old woman placed the calabash before her, dipped the fennel into the water, then neatly cut the neck of the rooster and allowed a few drops of the blood to fall into the calabash. . . . The silence of the room grew and grew. It went out from the place, boring into the desert, and a strange feeling came upon us, a feeling that something invisible had entered the place, something that knew of us, knew our business and where we were going. Ay, and didn't approve of it at all! That is what we felt.

The hag motioned with her hand to my Uncle Thurland—motioned to him that he should look in the calabash of water. Thurland thrust his head forward and looked; face over the calabash he looked, and what he saw drew his head down and down, and the choking silence was so great that I wanted to scream. For whatever it was that my uncle saw, he was startled in a queer manner.

The hag waved her hand, and Thurland sat upright with a little sigh of relief. Then she signaled to Flane, and Flane leaned forward so that he could look into the calabash. And he gurgled in his excitement, like a baby.

Flane drew back, and the old woman looked at Thurland before inviting me to take a peep. Thurland nodded, and I pushed myself across the mat to peep into the calabash, my lips and throat dry with excitement.

For a minute I saw nothing; then the picture formed before my eyes: There was a slope of black rock that glittered like basalt, and on the top of this rock was a huge figure, a seated woman with her hands above her head, her face flat like the face of a negress, her legs bare. And her ankles and feet shone yellow in the water, shone yellow like gold.

The old woman uttered one word, the Arabic *moût,* which means death. A warning she was giving to Thurland and Flane. And the presence in the room, the invisible presence, tried to push home that warning. Africa was threatening us.

The hag made a few passes over the calabash and signaled to Thurland. And as Thurland looked, there came a soft smile on his face. Flane looked in his turn, and he grinned in the manner of Thurland. Then it was my turn.

I PUT my head over the calabash, and the flood of joy that came upon me made me cry out. For I saw in the clouded water the picture of my home —my home on the road from Glengariff to Kenmare. There, like a fine painting done in soft tints of brown and gold, was the Green Tree Farm where I was born and raised, true to every little detail. The gate leading up from the road, the little windows, the barn at the back, and beyond that again the waving trees and the old mill from which one can see the beauty of the Valley of the Sheen.

I stared at the picture till my eyes filled with tears so that I could see it no longer; and when I wiped the tears away, it had disappeared. Thurland spoke to me as I looked up.

"It's just a trick, Jimmy," he said. "I've seen it done before."

The hag spoke. In her own tongue she said: "And that is life." Thurland translated the words to me, a grin upon his face. "You should have stayed at home, Jimmy," he said, "—in sweet Kerry, where there is peace and comfort and nice things to eat and drink."

"I couldn't," I stammered.

"Then you've got to put up with the hard jabs that come to you," he said.

FLANE tossed a few coins to the hag, and we followed the Moor into another room to see the picture he had spoken of.

On the mud wall, fastened there by four brass-headed nails, was the picture of the woman that we had seen in the calabash of water, the body tinted a flesh-color, the feet and ankles yellow—a bright yellow, to show that they were gold.

Thurland sprang forward. His face was close to the drawing. Flane was beside him, muttering Gaelic curses. The drawing upset them, and well it might! For the first time they looked upon a sketch of the Woman with Golden Feet who was dragging them through the wastes—dragging them to their death, according to the hag in the next room.

The drawing was done on a square of dried sheepskin. It was, I learned later, not the work of an artist; the man who drew it knew nothing of perspective, but his ignorance of art didn't stop him from putting his dream into line and color. Without the training and instruction it had come, the fingers tracing the features as seen in the dream, and in some curious way putting into them all the lure that he had seen there while dreaming.

The woman of the sheepskin was breastless, but the form was feminine. The legs were long and beautiful, and the upraised arms were graceful, but it was the face itself that held us. The strange face. For the man who had made the picture had by some trick, that might have come from his very ignorance of art, put into the wide-open eyes a magnetic quality that was unexplainable.

For a long while my uncles stared at the drawing; then, slowly, they drew back from it and asked questions—questions uttered in whispers, their eyes upon the picture.

Who made it? And when?

Now, much of what the Moor answered I gathered from the comments of Thurland and Flane; for they, not content in hearing the story in the Moor's tongue, turned his words into English, and mumbled them as a sort of chorus to each other as he went on with the tale.

In the gloomy room the tale wrapped itself around us like threads around a spool—the very devil of a tale! We had found a link with the man who had written the song that the dwarf sang, the song of treasure:

This soldier of *La Légion Etrangère* had passed through the village on his way southward, alone and on foot, his camel having died in the wastes over which he had come. And he was mad. The devils of the big sands had burned the brain of him, and he was a shouting lunatic led forward by the woman he had dreamed of, the Woman with Golden Feet.

The one-eyed man described him to Thurland and Flane as a big blond man who knew no fear. The Moor was doubtful about his nationality; he didn't think him French, for he was too blond and too big. German, perhaps.

In imagination we pictured him, a big brute of a man storming down through the wastes, singing as he walked, singing so that the people in the mud huts thought him mad. Driving ever southward, chanting his wild song, the jackals of the desert answering him.

"Jimmy," said Thurland, "go and find the dwarf and bring him here."

I went and found the dwarf, and brought him back to where my uncles waited.

"Listen," said Thurland, halting the one-eyed man in his story, "is this the song that the blond soldier sang?" And saying that, he nodded to the dwarf, bidding him sing the verses.

NO need was there to ask the one-eyed man if it was the same song. His face answered the question. He beat time to it with his big hands, and he joined in on the chorus, thundering out the Temajegh words.

It seemed that the people of the village thought that the blond giant was afflicted by Allah. They were kind to him, though they were a little frightened by the song. The Moor had given him

food and drink and allowed him to sleep in the room in which we then stood, and he was so intrigued by the song and the picture that he went on with him. For seven days he had ridden into the desert; then the madness of the soldier had frightened him and he turned. But the blond giant went on; he had no fear.

AND for reward the *légionaire* had given the Moor the drawing on the piece of sheepskin; and now, seeing the desire in Thurland's eyes, the one-eyed man took the tacks from the picture and handed it to Thurland.

"You will carry it," he said. "You have the same madness that was upon him that gave it to me. The same look is in your eyes."

The words frightened me, for I too thought that a madness was coming upon my Uncle Thurland. And what I saw was fattened by the presentation of the picture; for every time Thurland looked at the picture of the breastless woman, she looked at him and put her magic on him, her terrible magic.

The sheik wished us to stay, he being afraid that the robbers would return; but the feet of my two uncles were of quicksilver and could not keep still. And the drawing prodded them, prodded them the way the finger of the devil prodded old Tommy Flaherty when he stole the poorbox from Kenmare Church.

And the one-eyed man dug out of his memory stories that the mad soldier had told him on their journey, tremendous stories that the white sunshine gave life to. For doubt couldn't exist in that land. Thurland listened to the stories, polished them in his own way and told them to us; and Anastasia and I believed them, though we were afraid: Stories of gems that had slipped from one hand to another through the dead centuries. From the hands of kings and emperors to the soft silken fingers of courtesans that they loved, and from the fingers of the same courtesans to adventurous devils they admired, and from them to the gamblers, or to better-fighting devils who took them with the sword-point. Now and then the church got them, a fat cardinal receiving them as payment for shriving the soul of a scoundrel on his deathbed.

There was no one on God's sweet earth who could tell a story of treasure like my Uncle Thurland. For he used words that were like crushed opals, they falling from his tongue and building up belief with the color and sheer beauty of them.

Half the treasure that was ever lost to the world lay south of us, so said Thurland. Where else would it be?

"Do you think you'd find it in England or Ireland?" cried Thurland, when Anastasia uttered little words of doubt. "England, where the Jews strain the mud of Whitechapel through their fingers in search of a lost ha'penny! Ireland, where they've dug in every boreen, thinking they'd find enough to buy a pint of porter! No, it's in a place like this, where the devil has hidden it away—and where brave hearts are wanted to search for it!

"Where," cried Thurland, "are the fine big emeralds that John of Brienne, who was once Emperor of Jerusalem, took from the Turks when he mowed them down by the thousand?"

And I, who had never heard of John of Brienne, sat open-mouthed when he put the question. But Thurland knew of old John of Brienne, a paladin of paladins, who loved and fought when he was four-score and eight.

"And where," he demanded, "are the great treasures that the Templars gathered? The jewels of Nureddin, that blazed so brightly that you could read by the light that came from them? The devil's own quantity of stuff has been carted down here and hidden! Hidden for years and years and years!"

We couldn't contradict him. We could say nothing when that husky voice of his boomed questions at us.

THE sheik gave us fresh camels, he being very pleased with Thurland and Flane. He gave us also pack camels that he loaded with native rice and groundnuts and millet and dried dates. And on the afternoon of the day we saw the hag and the drawing, we rode out of the village—Thurland and Flane, Anastasia, the Arab wrestler, the hairy man, the dwarf, the slave-girl who refused to stay behind, the one-eyed Moor and I, we rode out of the gate with all the men, women and children screaming good-bys to us. Some added a prayer to Allah for our safety, knowing in their minds that we needed as much protection as Allah could spare. And in that belief they showed their wisdom.

This story of a hazardous quest beyond the Sahara comes to its great climax in our forthcoming June issue.

Prairie

In this department we print each month the best five true stories contributed by our readers. (For details of this contest, see page 3).

WHEN I lived with my parents on a homestead, the Dakota prairies were just being settled. Our home was a sod house dug partly into the side of a hill, where snows of the long winter drifted completely over the top of it.

In summer there was always a prairie-fire menace. The long buffalo grass made a fire which would sweep swiftly across the prairie faster than a man could run. My father usually plowed a few furrows, but did not backfire unless it was necessary.

One day in early fall, my father took me to town and bought me a new duck coat—quite an event. In the afternoon we were returning, and were now about six miles from home.

A dry thunderstorm blew up and passed by not far to the north of us. Soon after it had blown on across the hills, we saw a column of smoke spiraling high above the buttes to our left, and drifting swiftly toward us!

"Lightning must have started a fire," said Father anxiously. "Wind's blowing that smoke right toward home too!"

He whipped the horses up as the smoke changed to billowing clouds which rolled ominously over the prairie.

Before we reached home, he had the horses in a gallop. The fire quickly spread until it was rolling toward us, both from behind, and to our left. I remember watching Father's tense, anxious face, with a sort of wondering fear, yet wholly confident that he would see that everything came out all right.

I remember seeing Mother waiting for us out by the trail which ran near the house. Seeing her dimly through the smoke while we were still some distance off, increased my eerie feeling. I wondered why there were tears in her eyes as she kissed me, and Dad.

As he stood with his hands on her shoulders and looked into her eyes, he seemed tall, and proud of her, when she said: "I drove the cattle into the bare lot, and took the colt out of the stable; but I was afraid to set a backfire, because I was afraid you might not get through it."

"I knew I could depend on you, Mary," he said.

Mother looked kind of pleased and happy, even though she was worried.

Quickly Father gave instructions:

"You start a backfire around the stable and stacks; I'll take the plow to those stacks beyond the ridge, and try to backfire before the fire gets to them!"

They looked toward the ridge, and already the fire was coming over it!

"You can't get to those stacks, dear; that fire will cut them off in a few minutes!" fearfully she pled with him.

"I've got to, Mary—or we can't keep our stock this winter; the pasture will be gone now. I'll go through the fire where it is burning cross-wind—the blaze won't be quite so high."

As Mother looked at him, her face was white, pleading. "Dear—" She hesitated, seemed thinking; then, "All right," she said, and kissed him.

"Get me a bunch of sacks out of the granary, son; and Mother can start a backfire. While you are gone, I'll load up the plow."

I ran to do his bidding. Hastily Dad ripped a sack, wet the pieces, and fastened them to the bridles so they covered the horses' nostrils. He tied his wet handkerchief over his own face, then threw the sacks in a bucket of water and set them in the wagon. He had loaded the plow while I was after the sacks. Grabbing the handful of matches which Mother gave him, he started the horses on a gallop toward the blaze roaring down from the ridge, while Mother

on FIRE

A relatively commonplace episode made memorable in the telling—

By JOHN CLAYTON

stood with her arms around me and stared after him with anxious and pallid face.

As the wagon went bouncing and rumbling out of the yard, our old dog Rover dashed after it, barking in wild excitement! Father shouted at him to go back, and finally threw the plow-wrench at him, but Rover followed almost into the blaze.

Father turned to wave his hand at us as he disappeared into smoke and flame. Mother sort of sobbed as her arms tightened around me. If he won through, he must still go through a second line of flame to reach the stacks, and then might not have time to set a backfire before the red terror caught up with him again!

Suddenly Mother came to life: "The haystacks, Jackie," she cried.

We wet our sacks in the tank and raced to the furrows around the stacks. With trembling hands she started a blaze on the side of the furrows toward the wind. With our wet sacks we kept the blaze small, and running each way along the furrow. On the side away from us we let it burn to meet the on-rushing prairie fire.

It was only a hundred yards away now, but our backfire was spreading rapidly before the barn lot. With our wet sacks we desperately kept abreast of it and beat out any flames which leaped the furrows. The cattle were bawling in terror, so that we were afraid they would break away. But finally the worst was over, as the flames began to burn out in our backfire. With the wind shifting slightly it raced around us, and swept like a hurricane across the prairie! On a veritable island it left us—surrounded by a smoking sea of black.

Tears were streaking the grime on Mother's face as she looked toward the blackened ridge.

Apparently Mother could stand the suspense no longer, for she said, "Come on, Jackie!" and started toward the ridge trail which led to the distant haystacks. The thunder's mutterings had changed to heavy rumblings, and the sky was growing blacker.

At about where we saw Father disappear in the flames, we found the charred wagon end-gate where it had evidently bounced out in the mad gallop. Beside it lay my new duck coat practically unharmed—a freak of the fire! Providence often looks out for little boys.

JUST then Father drove over the ridge. The horses were singed and sweating, and looked as though they could hardly stand. He kissed Mother's tear-stained face, and his too was black with grime. The air, which had become still and sultry, began moving in a fresh, cool breeze. The smell of rain seemed to clear the smoke from the air. A mile or two to the east, the inferno was rushing on toward the horizon, leaving black desolation in its wake.

"I plowed a furrow, then backfired around the largest stack, but the fire beat me to the other."

"Oh, Dan! I don't mind the hay so much now. You are safe—you are safe!"

She threw her arm around his neck.

"Well," he replied quietly, as they looked into each other's eyes, "we'll just sell a cow or two—and raise that much more next year."

He took off his battered hat as raindrops began falling—kicking up puffs of black soot like bullets striking—welcome bullets, shot from heaven to destroy the red terror!

As I remember, that was always their spirit, in a land where crop failures averaged three years out of five.

"Yes, we just had bad luck this year, Dan; but it's all right, dear. I know we'll do better next year!"

Teak Wallah

A British forester in Siam continues the graphic story of his work with big trees and big elephants.

THE great teak forests of Northern Siam are worked mainly by British firms operating under license from the Siamese Government. The logs ride down the lonely rivers in order to reach the sawmills of Bangkok far away to the south, but before the trees can be felled at all they have to be girdled, or ringed, so that they may die and become buoyant enough to float. The work of girdling is done by Government forest officers; and one of the first jobs I had as a junior teak-wallah was to inspect the girdling on behalf of the firm that had engaged me, in order to see that no trees were being missed.

When the cold weather was at its height, in January, the Siamese jungle was perfect, rather like an English wood in spring, with plenty of shade in spite of the falling leaves, a brilliant blue sky above, and a freshness in the air that never allowed the shade temperature to mount above 82° at two P.M., the hottest part of the day. Directly the sun went down the temperature fell with astonishing rapidity, and I had a huge log-fire, the size of a bonfire, made up outside my tent. After dinner I would sit out by it, watching the sparks cascading into the darkened, wind-foaming jungle, and listening to the kettle which was to make my toddy singing in the hot wood-ash.

Gradually the days grew warmer and the nights less chilly as the cold weather merged into the hot. The leaves were nearly all off the trees by now, and they crackled frostily as one walked over them. Jungle fires became frequent.

I was able to indulge in some rides on my pony Sunstar, and these outings in the cool of the evening were lovely. Every now and then some creature of the wild would flash across the road in front of Sunstar's head: a foxy-looking red wild dog, a gorgeously colored jungle-cock, a red squirrel, a barking-deer. And once I saw a most extraordinary animal: it had the snout of a bear, but since its body ended in a long bushy tail, it looked something like a cross between a hyena and a South American ant-eater, if such could be imagined. I saw it twice, first momentarily, then in plain view quite close to me for a good half-minute, and it could not have been any of the better-known animals. If anyone who reads these lines could give me some idea as to its identity, I should be grateful.

Now that the jungle was burnt-out, I became much more aware of bird-life than before. There were the black-and-white plover that in places swarmed in hordes and made the most tremendous row. At the slightest excuse,—a rustle in the undergrowth, the scamper of some gibbon in the tree-tops,—they would rise, screaming. Then there were two species of kingfisher: one all blue and gold, the other a little spotted gray creature. The giant hornbill was fairly common, and I often heard his huge wings swishing through the air, and his raucous "*kok-kok-kok*" as he alighted on some branch. It is his habit to wall his mate into a tree at nesting-time, a slight aperture only being left through which he can feed her—the idea being, I suppose, to insure that she gets on with her job of hatching the eggs.

Green parrakeets and minas were common. They both make good pets, minas especially being first-class imitators and therefore good talkers. Doves and green pigeon were also numerous, the latter having a lovely soft green plumage and bright blue or bright red claws. Jungle-fowl, the originators of the domestic variety, though I rarely saw them on the wing, could be heard crowing and scuttling in the brakes all round my camp.

There were no duck or teal or snipe in the vicinity, as these flourished in the flatter, more marshy districts farther to the south. I was soon to come across them, however, for when the next monsoon season was shrouding the jungle in rain, I received instructions to proceed to the firm's rafting station at Sawankaloke.

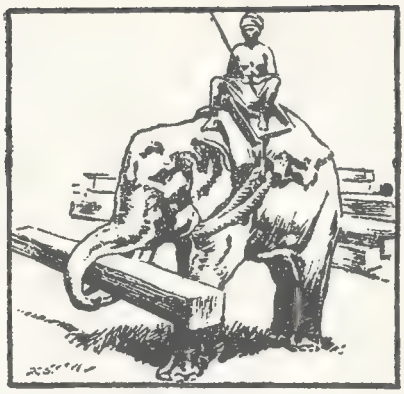
By REGINALD CAMPBELL

RAFTS are used because obviously you cannot allow thousands of logs to come drifting out of the jungle rivers and then down the great parent river Mae Nam into the populated water-way of Bangkok; somewhere the logs have got to be caught and collected into rafts which, manned by river experts, can be brought down under control to the capital. But rafts cannot negotiate waterfalls, and the companies therefore built their stations immediately below the southernmost falls of the main rivers.

A very big rise had occurred, I learned from Richmond, the man I had come to relieve, a fortnight before, bringing thousands of logs down from the tributaries of the north. These logs had been caught and brought into the banks by the villagers for the usual salvage money paid them by the firms; and now the licensed raftsmen—swarthy Siamese, for we were now south of Lao territory—were engaged in making the timber up into rafts, containing an average of one hundred and sixty logs apiece. Our job, Richmond told me, was to supervise the work in general, settle disputes between rival raftsmen, advance them money, take all raft-measurements when the rafts were completed, and then send them off on the first stage of their long journey down to Bangkok.

After a period in Sawankaloke, Richmond and I moved forty-five miles downstream to a place called Sukothai, where the company's second rafting station was situated.

Of all the desolate, miserable, God-forsaken places on this earth, Sukothai must surely be the worst! The country all round was just one vast, flat, desolate swamp of mud, cane and elephant-grass. And the heat was appalling. The only other white men in Sukothai—or indeed anywhere for a hundred miles in any given direction—were two Danes and an Englishman, all rafting assistants for their respective firms like myself. The work at Sukothai was very hard, but it was all the more welcome in that it helped one to forget about Sukothai.



"Fleas are good for a dog; they keep a dog from brooding on being a dog."

When the last of the rafts had left Sukothai, I thankfully departed from the place in order to see the timber through the royalty stations at Paknampoh. The rains were long over, and the brief cold weather had set in by the time the last raft got safely through to Bangkok. I then left Paknampoh and spent the hot weather doing some river trips, counting the logs left stranded on the sand-bars; and when finally I returned to northern H.Q. in Nakon, I found my boss Orwell in from his Muang Ngow forest. It was then I heard the tale of the running amok of our elephant Poo Kam Sen.

NOW, the Asiatic elephant differs much from his African brother. He has shorter, thicker legs, his ears are much smaller, his body is more massive, and he has a great square head in place of the African's sloping one. The biggest African elephant stands about twelve feet at the shoulder, the biggest Asiatic, ten; ten feet is exceptional, however, eight being quite a good height for a tusker. The biggest animal I ever saw—Poo Kam Sen—stood nine feet three inches.

In the Siamese teak forests baby elephants are allowed to run free beside their mothers till they reach the age of five. As soon as one is born,—and it must be remembered that teak-forest elephants live almost completely natural lives in their natural surroundings, dragging logs for only a few hours a day and then grazing in the jungle,—a cow elephant from one of the near-by workers attaches itself of its own accord to the mother and becomes the baby's "aunt." Thereafter nothing short of force will separate the two cows until the little one is at least three years old. The idea is, I suppose, that, with two great forms to guard it on either side, the babe will be well pro-

tected from the attacks of tiger; and the custom, which is presumably the result of instinct, is a remarkable one, known only, as far as I am aware, to teak-wallahs. A baby elephant, incidentally, sucks the milk of its mother with mouth, not trunk.

When the youngster is five it is separated by force from its mother (and "aunt" if still there), and tied to four stakes in the ground. Against these it strives uselessly till it learns that man is its master. Every attention and kindness is then shown it, and a mahout is detailed to give it a few simple lessons in being ridden. To these it usually readily responds.

From the ages of five to fifteen elephants mainly do baggage work, the howdahs and weights in them getting bigger along with the growth of the animal. At fifteen he or she is practically grown-up and can be put to timber-work.

The tales that are told of elephants living two or three hundred years are nonsense. Seventy or eighty is a good age as with humans, though cases no doubt exist of a hundred being reached, while wild elephants may sometimes attain a hundred and twenty years.

WHERE do elephants go to when they die? Many are the stories that have been woven round this mystery, as mystery to my mind it still is. Wild elephants are numerous in the north of Siam, yet never once did I meet a forest hunter or any other man who had ever come across the remains of one; which, considering the size of the skeleton, not to mention the tusks that never turn to bone-dust, is surprising. Personally, I do not believe any burial-ground *does* exist, but further than that I cannot go, preferring to treat the whole question as unanswerable.

Amongst our own force, of course, deaths were fairly frequent, and after cutting out the tusks we made a practice of burning the bodies with kerosene and firewood. Diseases such as anthrax and surra accounted for a good many, and occasionally we lost an animal through the bulls fighting one another. As the supply of calves was not sufficient to replace this constant drainage, we bought as and when required from Burmese and Shan elephant traders. These in turn obtained their supply under Government license by capturing wild elephants and breaking them in. The method of capture has been too often described by other writers for me to go into here, but briefly it is done by rounding up a herd and driving it into a stockade, after which the chosen animals are noosed by tame ones and tied to trees outside the enclosure. They are then put through the ordeal of the posts, which ordeal, remarkably enough, they often take better when fully grown than when they are youngsters. After that it is a matter of training them at the routine baggage and timber work until they are proficient enough to offer for sale.

The male has periods of disturbance known as "musth," during which he is highly dangerous and has to remain securely shackled to a tree. One can tell when an attack is coming on by an oily discharge that starts exuding from a hole in the temple; when the oil, which comes out very gradually, has trickled down to a level with the eye—then look out! If he's not properly secured, the chances are he'll try to kill anyone in sight.

An elephant cannot take all four feet off the ground at once. In other words, it cannot jump, and a ditch which a horse or even a big dog could cross will therefore stop it completely. It cannot turn its head round like the average animal, because its neck is too short, so if it wants to see what is going on behind, it has to turn its whole body round. This makes it very nervous at being suddenly approached from the rear.

It has an instinctive distrust of dogs and horses, though buffaloes and bullocks it doesn't mind in the least. With the exception of the whale, it is probably the finest swimmer of all the mammalia. It is a shade-loving creature, and cannot stand being exposed to hot sun. It loves getting frightened and starting "panics," especially if a female. It has such a *thin* skin that it suffers torments from the bites of insects. For this reason it flings, with the aid of its trunk, dust and mud over itself whenever possible. Its sight is not very good, but its powers of scent are enormous. It can wind a man or a tiger up to a distance of over two miles. It sleeps only for about three hours out of the twenty-four.

IN character elephants vary just as much as dogs, or human beings, for that matter. For example, I recall Poo Noi Pee Bah, literally the Small Mad One, a fine big tusker. For weeks on end he would be a model, working well and behaving well; and then, for no reason connected with "musth" or anything else, he would suddenly become a fierce, morose

brute up to any sort of mischief. He would attack other elephants, chase coolies; one night he even attacked the forest manager in his tent, and the manager was lucky to escape alive.

Then there was Mae Toom, who always looked in the pink of condition yet was constantly developing some irritating little minor ailment. And there were those who paired into chums. These "chums" were particularly exasperating. Two—they might be tuskers or they might be cows—would each suddenly decide that in the other he had met his soul-mate, and thereafter, as in the "aunt" racket, nothing short of force would separate them. Perhaps one would be a skilled river-worker and the other a hill-worker, necessitating completely different camps being chosen for them, and then the trumpetings, the bellowings, the general rumpus when the separation came! The midnight journeys, too, as they strove to meet again, and the oaths of the mahouts who had to follow them up next day! Still, one couldn't help sympathizing with them.

Then there were the killers that were always killers, generally huge, sullen tuskers which, though they had been broken in at the posts, had never really been tamed and still retained the souls of tigers. There was the female who would only have the hobbles placed on her hind-legs instead of on the fore; and the "traveler" who insisted on being put in the rear while on the march; and the tusker who loved digging up human corpses and eating them—a disgusting habit but only too painfully true.

TO return to Orwell and Poo Kam Sen: This elephant went on "musth," and unfortunately broke the chain by which he had been secured to a tree, and got free. Thus it happened that one morning, while traveling on their lawful occasions along a strip of the Nakon Muang Ngow road, two of our elephants, together with their mahouts, beheld the mightiest tusker in the land advancing upon them, hell in his mien and eye. Even they, the elephants, feared him, and turning, they fled sidewise into the jungle, shedding howdahs and mahouts in the process. Luckily for them, not to speak of the men, Poo Kam Sen continued up the road instead of branching aside. But a Lao husbandman, walking alone on the road, was knocked down, crushed, and left a shapeless mass of flesh and blood in the dust.

On then now, mad with "musth" and blood, went Poo Kam Sen. Except for the very slight chink and slur of the chain, he made not a sound; that is the terrible thing about him and his kind: he may be a foot or two behind you, yet you won't know he's there, so noiselessly does he move. Two bullock-carts appeared ahead. The drivers just had time to flee, and he was on them, smashing the carts to matchwood and killing the patient bullocks.

QUICKLY the news spread: Poo Kam Sen was loose and had turned killer. Amok, *amok*, AMOK! Orwell, out on a round trip of inspection, foamed into his compound by the village on his gray mare. Poo Kam Sen was not Orwell's elephant, but the chief who owned the animal was ten days' journey away, and he, Orwell, must be responsible for the safety of the village and its inhabitants.

"Tell everyone to keep to their houses," he snapped to the village headman. He next beckoned to his own elephant headman; the tuskers of the company were also in danger, for should any of them be seen by Poo Kam Sen, the chances are they would be attacked.

"Have every *Poo* that is near the village sent a good ten miles away," he ordered. Next he pointed to a strip of harvested paddyland opposite the company compound on the other side of the river.

"Dig a pit," he told them, "there, in the center of that field. Let it be eight feet deep and six feet wide, and let every man available get on with the work. When the pit is finished, conceal it with a covering of leaves and bamboo, then place a plank across the middle, so that a man may get over in safety and an elephant may not."

"So," murmured the brown audience, puzzled but vastly interested.

"When everything is ready," Orwell continued, "the mahouts shall drive two cow elephants into the field in the hopes of luring Poo Kam Sen after them."

"But the pit," objected the village headman. "Of what use is it, master? For it will only be by the merest chance that Poo Kam Sen will go near enough to fall into it."

"It will not be by the merest chance," returned Orwell. "Because a man will go into the middle of the field, and the elephant, seeing him, will charge. The man will then make for the pit and run across the plank, leaving Poo Kam Sen to fall in. Surely it is clear?"

"Meh!" exclamations of awe rose from a dozen dusky throats. "And who—who will be the man, master?"

"I will be," said Orwell.

Thus it came about that the pit was dug, the females driven into position, and Poo Kam Sen lured out after them into the middle of the field. Behind the pit, armed with bamboo spears and ropes, stood numerous mahouts and coolies. And with them was Orwell.

"I'm going," said he, after a final glance round at the preparations. Then he walked halfway down one side of the field, after which he swung boldly out into the open.

Poo Kam Sen, dallying with his cows, saw him, let out one great bellow of wrath, surged his whole colossal bulk forward to blot out this impudent pygmy. Orwell, turning, fled for his life toward the pit.

Poo Kam Sen gained on him—though he dared not turn round, he was sure of it. Ah, there was the concealed pit—at last, and there the plank leading to safety. One, two, three, four—and he was over.

CRASH! With a thud that literally shook the earth, the vast body smashed down into the pit.

"Quick! The ropes!" panted Orwell.

The coolies and mahouts leaped forward, but the awesome spectacle of the enraged leviathan, bellowing and trumpeting, smashing and heaving and goring at the sides of his precarious prison, caused their hands to tremble and the ropes to get confused.

"Out! He's getting *out!*" suddenly shrieked one of the men.

A pause, in which, to their horror, they saw that Poo Kam Sen, thanks to his stupendous might, had actually managed to tear down part of one side of the pit and was beginning to heave himself up over the falling earth! The coolies and mahouts waited for no more. Dropping their ropes, they fled across the Mae Ngow river. And Orwell, finding himself alone and helpless, had no course left but to follow them.

That evening news came that the elephant had killed another man.

There followed for the village, indeed for the whole district, nights and days of fear, a fear augmented one particular night by thieves dragging a chain through a darkened alleyway, thereby inducing the populace to believe that the killer was in their midst, and causing them to make a mad dash from the marketplace. Once the stalls were clear of occupants, the thieves helped themselves to whatever they wanted.

Owing to the menace of the killer, the work of the whole Muang Ngow teak forest came to a standstill; at last there came to Orwell the company's elephant-medicine-maker, bearing a bundle of arrows, the tips of which were stained with a greenish fluid, and a buffalo horn filled with powder.

"Lord," said he, "I have an idea. These are poisoned arrows, and if they are put in guns and fired at Poo Kam Sen's legs, then will he become so lame that he will scarcely be able to move at all; at which your servants the coolies and mahouts will surely have the chance to rope him."

Orwell jumped at the suggestion. He had his own gun, and the somewhat primitive firearms belonging to the village headman and one or two others, loaded with the arrows; then the party went off stalking Poo Kam Sen. They came across him, half in and half out of the jungle on the river-bank below the ford, and though Orwell tried to restrain his followers till they were at closer quarters, the sight of the great beast was too much for them; off went the guns, nearly killing Orwell in the process, and causing Poo Kam Sen to bolt without a scratch.

After that Orwell decided to hunt alone. What happened during the next few days only he knows, but he was successful in getting several arrows home, and it wasn't long before Poo Kam Sen was reduced to impotency.

"IT was a ghastly sight, though, in the end," said Orwell as he concluded his story. "The great brute was rolling and staggering like a drunken man, what with the pain of the poison and the 'musth' going out of him. . . . Will he get over it? He was almost himself again by the time I left to come in here."

Thus ended the running amok of Poo Kam Sen. And if ever a man showed courage and resource in a trying time, with no one to help him and a great responsibility upon his shoulders, it was Orwell.

It is with the deepest regret that I have just heard, while writing these pages, of his death in his native Gloucestershire. There was valor and no meanness in him.

Further adventures of our teak-wallah will be described in an early issue.

Russian Hunt

Instead of chasing the wolves they let the wolves chase them.

By BORIS PAVLOFF

DURING my last year in the Cadet School at Orenburg, in Russia, instead of spending the entire Christmas vacation at home, I decided to pay a visit to the home of my school chum Basil Svietloff. It was a trip of over a hundred miles. Old Jacob accompanied me, and we traveled by sleigh, the horses harnessed in troika, or three abreast. As we started on our journey, snow was falling heavily, and soon our progress became slow through the deep drifts. Nightfall brought us to a village buried in snow. Jacob jumped out and patted Arab's head gratefully. The snow in front of one of the mounds on the left moved, as the door behind it pushed open. A sturdy hulk of a man appeared in the doorway. Jacob recognized him as the chief man of the village. He cordially invited us in to get warm. It turned out that our host was a veteran soldier, and when he learned that I was in the Cadet School, he told of the campaigns in which he had participated. Later a bed was fixed up in the guest corner for me, and Jacob and the head-man lay down to sleep over the stove.

By morning the storm had sufficiently abated to permit us to continue our journey to the Svietloffs, where we arrived about dark. The three brothers came out to greet us.

"Hello, friend travelers," shouted Basil, who was the youngest. "What a storm! Hope you aren't frostbitten. Come in and get thawed out."

We assured him we were not frostbitten. Then Basil had another idea:

"Do you feel like going out again tonight?" he asked. "Brother thought it would be a good night for a wolf-hunt."

"There are plenty of wolves roaming about," added Alexander. "They are very daring and fierce this winter. A few nights ago a couple of the beasts came right up to the porch by the garden. Basil hurried to fetch a gun, but before he returned with it, they were gone."

The prospect of a wolf-hunt was exhilarating. The love of adventure and the hunter's instinct in me were strong. So it was quickly agreed that we should go on a hunt that very night—but not before we had partaken heavily of delicious meat pie and other things.

By about eight-thirty it had accommodatingly stopped snowing. The air was crisp, and the white-carpeted ground sparkled in the moonlight. Every dark object stood out plainly against the white background. The night was ideal for a hunt. The *rosvalni*—a low light seatless sleigh, open at the back—was brought up. It also had poles stuck out from each side to prevent it from overturning on curves. Blankets were piled on straw on its floor, on which we could sit. The stableman inspected the entire equipment carefully. Each of us stuck a revolver in his belt for emergency use. A young pig and another sack with pigdung in it, together with a long rope, were brought from the stables and placed in charge of Feodor. Alexander took the reins. With our guns beside us, after the usual paternal benediction, we were off on the night's adventure. With a greater knowledge of the perils of wolf-hunting, Basil's father dispatched a couple of men on horseback to follow our trail and be on hand if needed.

GALLOPING over crusted snow, the horses brought us to the edge of the forest. As we drove among the shadows made by the trees and bushes, we set to work on the final preparations for the sport. The sack was tied to the long rope and thrown out to trail along some sixty yards behind. The squeals of the unhappy little pig in the other sack in the sleigh were the only sounds which disturbed the night's stillness. Eagerly we watched the shadows for lurking wolves.

"The first wolf we see is yours, Boris. Be ready with your gun," Alexander reminded me.

He had scarcely uttered these words when I espied a pair of green eyes gleaming from the shadows on the left side of th road.

"Wait till he attacks the sack," cautioned Alexander in my ear.

Suddenly two huge wolves pounced on the trailing sack. I brought my gun to bear on them and fired twice. One of the beasts jumped high into the air, and rolled over when he landed. The other clung tenaciously to the sack with his wicked teeth. The horses snorted and pranced about with instinctive dread. Again I shot at the second beast, and he too rolled over. Excited and gloating over the kill, Basil and I jumped out of the sleigh to get the quarry, but Alexander again admonished us:

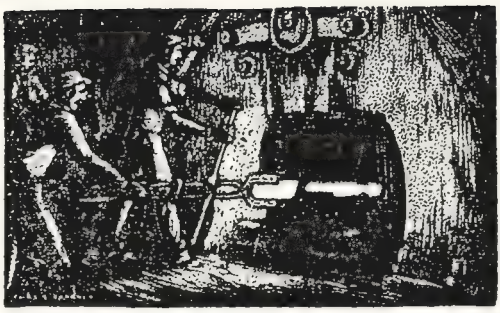
"Better go slow and be careful. Be sure they are dead before you get too close. If only wounded they will be nasty."

Cautiously we approached the beasts, and when close enough to examine them, found them to be killed, and dragged them into the sleigh. And then we resumed the hunt.

TWICE again we saw glittering green eyes in the shadows, but the beasts slunk off. The little pig had become mute, and had to be prodded into noisy activity to remind it of the part it must play in the night's adventure. For a long time no wolf showed itself, and we were growing impatient. Then at the edge of the forest appeared a large dark moving mass.

The horses snorted, and kicked at the shafts frantically. It was a pack of wolves, and they kept coming steadily nearer to us. They were more numerous than we had expected to meet. When they were within close range, we shot at them with gun and pistol repeatedly. One of the beasts jumped at a horse's head, but a well-directed shot laid him low. The snarling pack surrounded us. We were in a real fix, but we kept up the fire and eventually killed or cowed them. When five of them lay dead, the rest ran off, much to our relief. There had been nine of them. We congratulated ourselves on getting out of the mess so luckily.

Content with the night's sport, we turned back home, where we found Mr. Svietloff still up and waiting anxiously for us. He understood better than we young-bloods that hunting wolves was very serious business, and was relieved when we were safely home.



I WAS repairing a sixty-ton axle-press in the heat-treating department of one of Detroit's largest car factories, with a fellow called John supervising the work. John was one of those men who was always too eager to please the men higher up, and before the main bearing caps had been replaced on the punch press, he told the superintendent that the job was complete, and took me over to work on an electric carbonizing furnace at the other side of the building.

Two of the center rails in the bottom of the furnace bed had become warped by the months of constant heat; but having been shut off two days previously, it was quite cool now; and crawling through the fourteen-inch opening, I began replacing the old members with new ones, while John fed me the material to do it with.

It was a dusty, cramped-up place to work in; I was hurrying, and had but a few minutes' work left to do when I heard the superintendent bawling out John about the punch-press flying to pieces.

I had to grin to myself. But I was far from grinning a few moments later as I had just drawn the last bolt snug, and was about to pull myself through the tight-fitting opening to get outside, when the electrically operated doors jammed shut and locked me inside.

Now I realized that I was in one deuce of a fix, and many crazy thoughts ran through my mind. I thanked my stars that it wasn't a blast furnace that I was in, as in that case I would have been roasted alive practically the instant that the gas was lighted. Still, I could picture myself dying an awful death in that infernal hole a short time after the operator turned on the electricity.

I hadn't the least doubt but that John had given the report that the job was completed before it was, and that in his frenzy over being bawled out by the superintendent, he had entirely forgotten that I was still in the furnace.

But rattled and fearful as I felt, I had

Locked in a Furnace

What happened when they really turned on the heat.

By IVAN J. STRETTEN

sense left to realize that I was at the wrong end of the furnace ever to hope to get those outside to hear my calls or pleadings. So I began to work my way toward the other or feeder end of the furnace some fifty feet away. I had to crawl on my stomach, and I barely reached my destination when the electricity was turned on.

The closest electrical element was about six feet away, but in a very short time the place became extremely uncomfortable, and the big beads of perspiration fairly rolled down my face and body.

I began to yell and pound on the cast-iron door, and the more I continued to do so without an answer from the outside, the further my spirits seemed to drop. Then I realized that because of the constant rumblings associated with such a department, it was next to impossible to make myself heard any distance away from the outside of the furnace; but I still held hopes that some one passing close by would eventually hear the noise which I was frantically endeavoring to create.

Every second it became more hot and suffocating, and my clothes began to scorch with the heat; but by taking off my smock and hanging it over the nearest conduit-cover, I managed to keep my face from burning.

This little act proved very helpful for a few minutes, but the smock started to smolder and I was forced to take it down. The smoke from the smock and the increasing heat caused me to cough and gasp for breath; a person has to experience such a thing to realize the many weird thoughts that ran through my mind as I visioned being roasted to death with hundreds of other people only a few feet away not knowing of my desperate predicament.

It takes several hours to bring the temperature of an electric carbonizing furnace to a red heat, and at least a couple of hours before it becomes hot enough to roast a person; but after twenty minutes I was on the verge of calling quits, when the door opened an inch or so.

I knew that the act of lifting the door a fraction was for the purpose of letting out any gas which might be present in the corners of the furnace, and the instant that I saw the door move, I yelled with all my might, but the operator failed to hear me.

I must admit that I was actually frantic now, and had practically given up all hopes of ever being saved, when I suddenly thought of shoving my hammer handle through the small crack at the bottom of the door. I couldn't hope to raise the half-ton casting, but I didn't want it to go shut again, as the little fresh air that I could get through the opening felt intensely refreshing to my parched throat and lungs, and I imagined that by wiggling the hammer-handle I might happen to draw attention.

MY feet began to feel like red-hot coals, and I could distinctly smell the grease on my overalls scorching from the heat, but the little fresh air that I managed to get from under the door seemed to make it less suffocating than it had been a few minutes before.

Numerous accidents and narrow escapes from death, on the motorcycle race tracks and in many other hazardous undertakings had hardened me considerably to pain and worry, but this was one instance when I gave up. In fact I had lost all hope entirely when the door suddenly flew open and John appeared in the opening.

"Good Lord!" he frantically exclaimed as he dragged me out.

I had promised myself to say many rough things to John if he ever got back in time to save me. But I couldn't help feeling as sorry for him as myself when I saw his scared condition, and to this day John and I are the only ones who actually know what happened.

Held for

A young trader in Rhodesia gets himself into a serio-comic jam.

THERE was famine in southern Rhodesia in 1896; the Matabele were in rebellion, the country burned off, all oxen from the Zambezi to the Cape killed by the fell disease of rinderpest. South Africa had inherited the seven plagues of Egypt, and corpses of starved natives strewed the land.

I was running a wattle-and-daub trading store at Mangwe, Matabeleland, six hundred miles from the nearest railroad, and then was agent for the old ten-mule leather-swung coaches. Besides those, only the transport riders who rode up provisions, the few Dutch farmers and the British South African Police in the tiny fort, constituted my customers. Occasionally an Afghan, Ali Khan, passed with a drove of horses from the back of the Kalahari Desert; sometimes a Hindu came along with a herd of sheep brought out of the Kalahari grass.

Food being so scarce, I always had thirty or forty uninvited "boys" working about the store and kraal for what I could give them to eat. They, however, were only a continual nuisance. I never knew which were my unpaid assistants and which weren't. "Boys" came, and stole, and went.

The Hindu was in the store one day, and against the law, he was drinking Scotch whisky. Dressed in regular white Indian costume, with red sash and turban, he yet was drinking his whisky straight.

"Seyyid," I remarked, after he'd polished off a whole bottle, "when you die, you'll die pre-cremated."

"No, baas," he corrected. "When I die, I die still thirsty and standin' up."

The Hindu presently turned and looked out over the parched sand, and to his herd of distressed, panting sheep. My eyes followed his, switched about, opened wide. Coming out of the round mud-and-thatch hut I called my dining-room, I saw a native. In one hand the native had a jar of my most sacred preserves, in the other a can of beef.

Like a flash I came to. With a howl I was over the rough empty-beer-case-built counter and to the door. The native heard me coming, took one squint at me, then was off, swift as a springbok.

The Hindu was outside quick as I, but with me there was a rifle. For some reason, instead of bolting across the veldt, the native headed straight for the fort.

For two hundred yards the "boy" sprinted downhill to the dry, reedy bed of the Mangwe River, then leaped to climb the zigzagging path up a couple of hundred feet of rocky rise. Angry, yet laughing, I turned to Seyyid. I was only a kid of about twenty.

"Poor hungry devil!" I said. "I don't blame him, Seyyid. But you watch me make him hop over those rocks."

The Hindu glowered. "Shoot, baas! Shoot the blixom! He only dog!"

"No, I'll not shoot him," I grinned. "But I'll make him move."

Twenty or thirty feet either side of the native I planted bullets, and watched the sand spurt up, sent them over his head, and heard them ricochet and go *whe-e-e!* over the brow of the rise. In but a moment the fellow was out of sight.

Early in the afternoon I saw, coming down that same rocky slope, two police.

The police came in and had a drink. One of 'em, a Swede, addressed me: "You bane under 'rrest," he said.

I didn't take any notice, and produced the dice-box. For an hour or so we threw for drinks. Then suddenly, as if remembering something, the Swede repeated: "You bane under 'rrest."

"What in blazes d'you mean?" I asked him at last. "What's the joke?"

The other policeman supplied the information. "You're under arrest, Bertie. We've come over to fetch you. This morning you shot at and tried to kill a Kaffir. Inkomozaan, he calls himself."

Murder

By FERDINAND BERTHOUD

"Kill a Kaffir!" I bawled. "All I did was to shoot all around him to make him run faster. He stole stuff off me. Ask Seyyid here. He saw it all."

The Swede gurgled. "You bane under 'rrest."

It was dusk when I shut up the store. By maneuvering I managed to get each policeman still enough to sling his rifle strap over his shoulder and chest. Then, in the middle and holding each up by an arm, I started for the fort and doom. Gripping a bottle, Seyyid watched me go.

AT the fort there was little formality. Armstrong, the Commissioner, just looked at me sadly and told me what a serious crime I'd committed.

"Crime?" I exploded. "Has that boy got the nerve to come and tell you I was trying to kill him, when all I was doing was trying to scare him when he'd been stealing off me?"

"There's the law," Armstrong argued. "You could have lodged a complaint against this Inkomozaan, and have had him punished."

I went purple. "How am I going to know that a running boy, three or four hundred yards away from me, is named Inkomozaan? Am I a seer? I didn't shoot *at* him. I played with him."

"You shouldn't have used firearms," Armstrong abjured. "I'm afraid, Bertie, you'll have to appear before me tomorrow morning on the charge of attempted murder. If you have any witnesses, you must bring 'em. And you'll have to put up seventy-five pounds' bail; otherwise I'll have you kept in the fort all night."

"Bail?" I howled. "What are you trying to make of me? A criminal? I've only got about twenty pounds with me, Armstrong, in any case."

"S-s-s-sh!" Armstrong soothed. "Don't get upset. I'll lend you the odd fifty-five, Bertie. You be here at ten tomorrow."

I took Armstrong's fifty-five, fished out my own twenty and put 'em along, handed back the seventy-five. "All right, Armstrong," I agreed. "I'll be here. So'll half the country."

And that was that.

Every Dutch farmer, Dutch *Vroouw*, Dutch *Tante*, trader, prospector, transport-rider and policeman living within a score of miles was there when I rode over next morning—fully a hundred people. The Kaffir telegraph had spread the news quickly.

Armstrong's mud hut wasn't any bigger than any of mine; in the fort there wasn't any hut big enough for a courthouse. Foresighted, Armstrong had set Kaffirs to bring in trunks of trees and arrange them in a semicircle out in the open for those interested to sit on, and that was the court.

Almost all that day we sat in the blazing sun; and the business of the court didn't progress at all. Right at the jump I'd explained to Armstrong that Seyyid, my only witness, was missing when I'd got home the night before, and hadn't put in an appearance since.

"That's unfortunate," Armstrong allowed. "We'll just have to wait till he can be found. I'll send a dozen or so native police out, and maybe they'll round him up."

I was thinking about my closed store, and the thirty or forty strange Kaffirs lurking about it. "I hope to God they do!" I told him.

Along about three-thirty, Hans Lee's wife and Crissie Van Rooyen stretched out flat on the sand by Armstrong's chair and went to sleep. One by one the native police came in, shaking their heads. Seyyid's sheep still were straggling about, they said, but there was no sign of any Hindu.

Blinking, of a sudden Armstrong came to life and got to his feet. "Court's adjourned till tomorrow," he announced.

NEXT day at ten o'clock the crowd was bigger. And Willie G—, from a store fifteen miles up in the Pass in the

Matoppo Hills, had of his own volition shut up and come down by coach to be my lawyer. But still no Hindu!

Armstrong rose stiffly. "Sorry; I have to do my duty. I have to send a report in. We must adjourn for the day, and be here again tomorrow. Bertie, I warn you if you don't produce this witness of yours tomorrow, I'll have to send you and the case as it is to the court in Bulawayo, and let them deal with it. We can't wait forever."

Willie was very drunk when we went to bed that night, but his head was working. "Ber'ie," he said, "court aint bein' run right. You wait 'morrow mornin', Ber'ie, an' see what happens."

Several sixteen-mule tented wagons had pulled in that third morning, and the court seats were dotted with a score or so of barefoot Dutch children. Fires were going in all directions, and big-breasted Kaffir *umfazis* were preparing food.

Willie didn't sit down at all. "Armstrong," he opened out, as soon as the Commissioner hove in sight, "what sort of hoojah are you trying to pull off here? You don't know one thing about court procedure. You've been keeping everybody waiting the past two days for the prisoner's one witness, without once making any formal charge, or calling any witness for the prosecution."

Armstrong visibly wilted. "Well, I was only trying to be decent, wasn't I? I wanted to give Bertie a chance."

"Chance, me foot!" Willie jeered. "Go on with the case."

Armstrong shuffled. "Very well," he agreed. "Here goes."

In their own tongue Armstrong called to his beautifully muscled brown-black native police to rise from their haunches and stand behind him, then seated himself in his chair. Waving to the much occupied and totally inattentive crowd around, he did his best.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he opened out, "four days ago the prisoner, Bertie, shot at a native, one Inkomozaan, with intent to kill. The charge against him is attempted murder. The first witness for the prosecution will be the aggrieved native, Inkomozaan. . . .

"Inkomozaan," rose his voice, in Matabele, "come here and stand at my side and before me, where I can see you and hear your tale."

"Yuh!" Willie helped him. "Hear his tale!"

For a full minute the scattered crowd took notice and waited. No native made any attempt o break from the mob. A tremor went through the muddle of whites; among the natives appeared strange consternation—a mumbling and muttering as of puzzled dismay. Presently one more bold native policeman edged round to Armstrong.

"Inkomozaan, the baas says he wants?" he inquired.

"Yes, Inkomozaan."

The Kaffir hunched his shoulders, and opened his arms wide as to embrace the earth. "Oh, Inkomozaan? Inkomozaan was frightened, baas. The big crowd frightened him. Two days ago he ran away."

"Ran away? Where to?"

The Kaffir hunched again. "Into the hills, baas. Into the bush. He's gone. Lost."

As a man stricken, Armstrong gripped the edges of his chair. For an instant his face was blank, and he didn't speak. Suddenly he sprang to his feet, dug a hand into a pocket and brought out a wad of bills. Still silent, he counted off twenty pounds.

"Here, Bertie," he said at length. "It's all over. Here's your bail-money. The complainant's vanished. The case is dismissed."

"Yuh!" Willie came in again. "I knew you'd be glad to give him his money back and get rid of him. Now he and I'll go over to the store and spend the twenty."

SIDE by side up the slope toward the store Willie and I rode. Standing bang in front of the door of the store we both noted a white-clad, red-turbaned figure. Well I knew who it was. The figure ran to meet us.

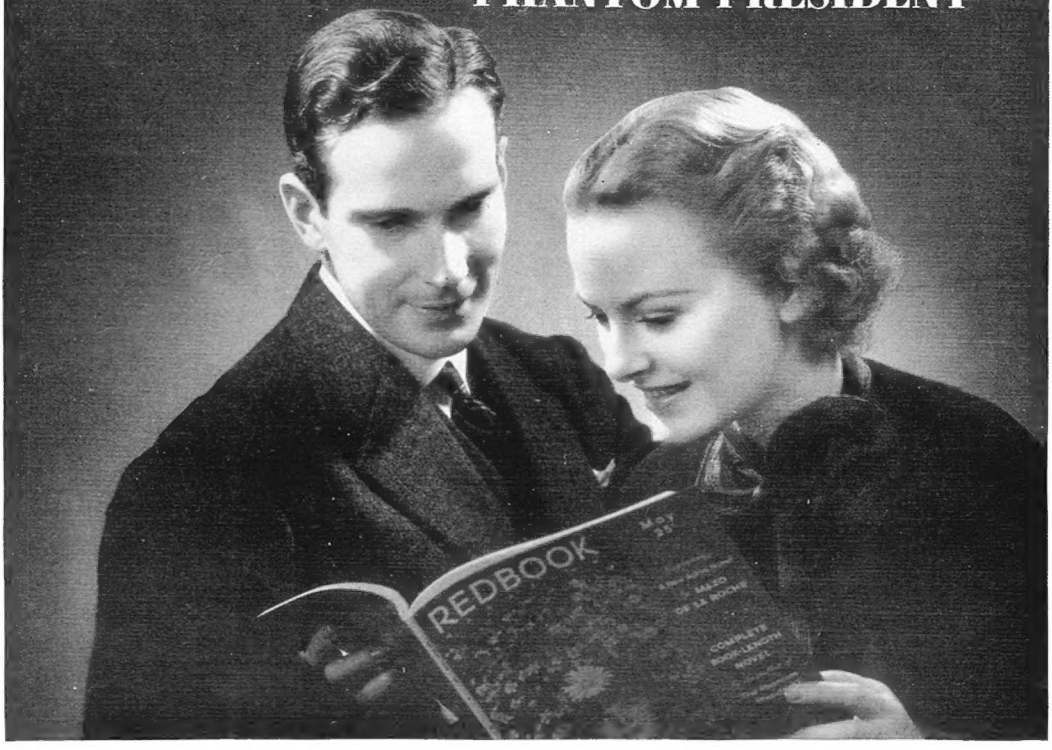
"My baas! My baas!" Seyyid fairly sang as he ran. "My baas is safe and is back again!"

Mad as a hatter, I slid to the ground, caught the Hindu by his white kimono and roughly shook him. "What in hell have you been playing at?" I raved. "Three days, now, I've been standing a chance of going to jail or getting hanged, and you could have got me out of it in two minutes! What's the idea?"

Seyyid's dusky face became almost beatific. He waved a bottle of whisky. "I save the baas!" he cried. "I save him!

"Three nights and two days I kneel in the reeds in the river-bed, baas, and pray that the baas get off!"

"THAT NEW COMPLETE NOVEL BY WORTS IN REDBOOK IS EVEN BETTER THAN HIS 'PHANTOM PRESIDENT'"



"...and David Garth's complete novelette is one of the most entertaining things he's ever done"

Remember "The Phantom President," that greatly debated motion picture of three years ago, and the sensation it caused? Well, George Worts, the author of "The Phantom President," has written for May Redbook a complete book-length novel of 50,000 words that even outdoes his previous success. The novel is called "Absolute Quiet"—a title that belies its dramatic happenings and smashing climax. And that's not the only exciting feature in May Redbook. There is also a complete novelette by David Garth, one of the most popular of the younger writers. It's called "Cabin Cruiser"—15,000 words of sheer entertainment. Then there are fascinating continued novels, short stories, articles. Don't miss May Redbook—on sale April 3rd.

AND BOTH ARE IN ADDITION TO THE REGULAR CONTENTS OF REDBOOK

TWA
TWA
THE
LINDBERGH LINE
LUCKY STRIKE
"IT'S TOASTED"
CIGARETTES
LUCKY STRIKE
Luckies are less acid!
Recent chemical tests show* that other popular brands have an excess of acidity over Lucky Strike of from 53% to 100%
Luckies—a light smoke
OF RICH, FULL-BODIED TOBACCO — "IT'S TOASTED"
*RESULTS VERIFIED BY INDEPENDENT CHEMICAL LABORATORIES AND RESEARCH GROUPS